

THE LOST HISTORY OF JERUSALEM



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INTRODUCTION

The city of Jerusalem first appears in the Bible in the time of Abraham (**Genesis 14:18-20**) where he was greeted by the mysterious priest of God Most High, Melchizedek, who was also the King of Salem. This priest is identified as the pre-incarnate Jesus Christ by Paul in **Hebrew 7**.

Salem means peace and Jerusalem means city of peace. Given its history it doesn't seem that appropriate a name but according to **Zechariah 8:1-5** it will become the capital city of the whole world after Jesus Christ brings the Kingdom of God to earth and it will then become a city of peace.

After Judah conquered the city soon after Joshua's death the Jebusites regained control of the city and they continued to inhabit the fortress city until the time of King David who conquered the city and brought the Ark of God into it.

Since King David defeated the Jebusites about **1004 BC** and conquered the city Jerusalem has been the focus of God's people. It became the capital city of the united nation of Israel under King David and became the holy site where the Temple of God was built in the days of David's son, Solomon.

The Temple would later be destroyed by the Babylonians in **585 BC** and again rebuilt 70 years later by the returning Jewish exiles from Babylon. What is referred to as the second Temple would later be completely destroyed by the Romans during the Jewish revolt in **70 AD**.

For the last 2000 years the Jewish people have longed to rebuild the Temple in Jerusalem. So far this dream has never fully come into fruition. In the seventh century AD a new religion swept across the Middle East – Islam. What has come to be accepted as the true site for where the Temples originally stood by Judaism and the world at large came to be the site where the Islamic mosque referred to as the Dome of the Rock was built in the seventh century AD. From the Jewish perspective the Dome of the Rock stands in the way of a new Temple of God ever being rebuilt in Jerusalem.

This raises the question: "Is the site of the Dome of the Rock on the so-called Temple Mount the true location of the Temples?" New historical information has come to light showing that the acceptance of the "Temple Mount" by the Jews as the true site of the Temples is only several hundred years old and that for the first millennia up to the Crusades the Jews accepted another site as the true site of the Temples. What is just as interesting is that this long forgotten other site would free the Jewish people today to rebuild the Temple without the removal of the Dome of the Rock were it to be commonly accepted by the Jewish religious authorities.

Jerusalem is not only the focus of the Jewish religion but also of the Christian religion. It is the place where Jesus Christ, the Son of God who came to die for the sins of humanity, was crucified, buried and later resurrected three days and three nights later.

In the fourth century AD the first professing christian emperor of Rome, Constantine, sent his mother Helena to the Middle East to discover all the true holy sites mentioned in the Bible.

After making enquiries with local Jews Helena chose the spot where a temple to Venus stood as the true location in Jerusalem of where Jesus Christ was crucified and buried. The temple of Venus was torn down and a new church erected. This church in the NW of the walled Old City of Jerusalem became known as the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and has been revered to this day by Catholics and Eastern Orthodox Christians as the true site of Christ's crucifixion, burial and resurrection.

In the late 1800's another site was suggested as the true location. Just north of the Damascus Gate, north of the Old City is a hill which has certain erosional features giving the hill the appearance of a skull and so it was thought to be Golgotha – the place of the skull referred to in the Gospels. This hill, known as Jeremiah's grotto, became the Protestant choice as the true site of the crucifixion. Nearby is a tomb in a garden area. This Garden Tomb location then became the Protestant choice as the true site of Christ's burial and resurrection.

New historical and biblical information has come to light showing that the true site of the crucifixion, burial and resurrection was neither north nor west of the city and Temple area but in an easterly direction from the Temple.

In **Psalm 137:5-6** we read: "If I forget you O Jerusalem let my right hand forget her skill! If I do not remember you let my tongue cling to the roof of my mouth, if I do not exalt Jerusalem above my chief joy."

The Jewish people until the last century lost sight of the true geography of King David's Jerusalem. The original Mount Zion of David was thought to be the hill at and to the south of the SW corner of the Old City. With the discovery of Hezekiah's tunnel in 1880 the original City of David was properly relocated to the ridge above the Gihon Spring to the south of the SE corner which is to the south of the current walls of the Old City.

New historical information has come to light showing that the Temples actually stood directly above the Gihon Spring in the original City of David and not on the so-called Temple Mount to the north of the City of David.

Just as the Jews forgot the true location of the original Mount Zion and the true geography of the original City of David, evidence will be shown that they have also forgotten the true location of where the Temples once stood.

Not only have the Jews lost site of the location of their most holy site, so too have Christians. A site revered in the first few centuries after Christ's death and resurrection was overlooked by Helena and evidence will be shown that this location on the Mount of Olives is the true location of the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

OVERVIEW

With that background I would like to give a brief overview of what will be covered in this presentation of the lost history of Jerusalem.

The material presented here is a summary compilation of the work of Ernest Martin, a religious author who has had five years experience supervising archaeological digs near the Temple Mount in Jerusalem. Until his recent death he ran "Associates for Scriptural Knowledge" having previously been associated with the Worldwide Church of God until the early 1970's.

The majority of the material in this summary compilation comes from two books written by Ernest Martin - "The Temples That Jerusalem Forgot" written in 2000 and "Secrets of Golgotha" written in 1982.

Much of the history covered in this summary compilation about what has happened with the Temple Mount and the City of David sites since the fall of the Roman Empire comes from a further article that Ernest Martin wrote in 2001 entitled "Major Keys in Discovering the Lost Temples of Jerusalem" (<http://askelm.com/temple/t011112.htm>). Another often referenced article by Ernest Martin in this compilation about the symbolism of the Temple is "The Temple Symbolism of Genesis" (<http://www.askelm.com/doctrine/d040301.htm>).

I have a tremendous respect for what Ernest Martin has been able to research and produce in his writings regarding the history of Jerusalem. His earlier work "Secrets of Golgotha", written over 20 years ago, has some amazing information on where the death and resurrection really was. It is written in quite an orderly way. In this compilation I have wanted to summarise all the key points and add other information to strengthen the case for his position.

His book, "The Temples That Jerusalem Forgot", has some earth-shaking conclusions particularly in regards to their possible prophetic impact. Should his conclusion that the Temple actually stood 600 feet south of the Dome of the Rock above the Gihon Spring be accepted by Jewish authorities it could play a big part in the rebuilding of the next Temple of God that is prophesied to occur in the end time.

His book on the Temples, unlike his earlier work, does not have a good orderly flow to it. My desire in this compilation is to summarise the key points of the book in a more ready-friendly orderly flow. Such an orderly flow plays an important part in helping the evidence have a more compelling impact on the reader. My desire in this presentation is to also enhance his excellent material with some excellent graphics to further the impact on the reader.

Ernest Martin has also presented much new information not covered in the book in the major article referred to above that he wrote the following year and posted onto his website. By combining the key points from the book and the additional article in a much better orderly flow I hope that this compilation summarising his findings will have a much more compelling impact upon the reader and further Ernest Martin's goal that the real truth about where the Temples really stood gain further acceptance.

I also wish to go beyond the history of what Ernest Martin has covered and cover the prophecies of what will happen with the end-time Temples that will be built in the future.

To begin our journey we will have a look at the geography of Jerusalem with the use of maps and visual aids to get a feel of the lay of the land and the many sites we will be discussing in this presentation.

When we've got a good feel of the lay of the land we will look at the impressiveness of the so-called "Temple Mount" complex known by the Arabs as the Haram esh-Sharif (the Noble Enclosure) with its impressive walls. We'll compare what we see with the prophecies that Jesus spoke about the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple.

We will see what Jesus prophesied about the destruction of both Jerusalem and the Temple to where their foundations would be completely dug up stands in stark contrast to the impressiveness of the ancient Herodian and pre-Herodian stones that make up the walls of the Temple Mount. We will look at many quotes from the first few centuries after Christ and the destruction of Jerusalem where the witnesses speak of how the prophecies of Jesus

came to pass in a very precise manner, effectively ruling out the “Temple Mount” as the true location of the Temples.

We will look at the records of Josephus that will identify the “Temple Mount” as not being the site of the true temple but the site of the Roman camp of Fort Antonio (including the western wall revered by Jews as the Wailing Wall). The Romans only left one thing standing after crushing the Jews in 70 AD and that was their fort as a reminder of their superiority. We will see from the records that Fort Antonio was much larger than historians give it credit for.

We will then look at the symbolism of the Temples and the tabernacle in the wilderness and how they symbolize the Garden of Eden and the throne of God in heaven. We will discover one very key element of that symbolism that will give us a major key to discovering the true location of the Temples of God – that it had to be very close to or directly over a spring.

We will then examine the history of the Temple from the time of David and Solomon and discover where the Temple was located in the original City of David on the SE spur south of the Temple Mount. We will see that it was in the centre of the original City of David, not to its north, and that it was directly above the Gihon Spring.

We will look at where Nehemiah and the returning exiles from Babylon built the new Temple after its destruction at the hands of the Babylonians. We will see that they built the Temple on that same SE spur where the original Temple stood.

We will then go forward in history to the time of the Macabbees in the middle of the second century BC and look at the dramatic events that occurred during the brief period of Jewish independence under Simon the Hasmonean. We will see how the stones of the whole Temple desecrated and vandalised by Antiochus Epiphanes were all torn down and removed in accordance with the principles of the statute condemning a house that had been corrupted by mildew.

In its place a new Temple was built. By understanding that a new Temple was built in its place we will see that Josephus wasn't in error when he said that Pompey was the first to defile the Temple in 63 BC when Palestine was conquered by the Romans. We will see the extra symbolism and significance of the events that began the Jewish festival of Hannukah or Festival of Dedication.

We will also look at the monumental event where over a period of three years Simon the Hasmonean and the Jews under him transformed the geography of Jerusalem by cutting down to bedrock the original Mount Zion just south of the centre of the original City of David. What was an impressive mountain was levelled and transformed the look of Jerusalem.

He also moved most of the government buildings to a “New Zion” that he began to establish on the SW hill that is west of the original City of David across the Tyropoean Valley. We will see how this “New Zion” (much like the British settlers naming New York after the city of York in England) create the confusion as to where the original City of David was located.

We will then examine in detail the descriptions of the Temple and the enlargements done by Herod the Great as specified by Josephus and see how the modern ideas of the Temple being on the Haram el-Sharif conflict with what Josephus plainly records in his works.

After quickly looking at Jerusalem's destruction again we will then look at the history of the sites over the past two millennia.

We will look at the two little-known attempts by the Jews to rebuild the Temple in early fourth century BC during the time of Constantine, first Roman emperor to support Christianity. The

Jews took advantage of the latitude he allowed them to rebuild their Temple and then later Constantine reversed it and forbid the Jews to continue their work.

This temple above the Gihon Spring was part complete and within a century only its western wall remained. Even it was defiled by the statue of a later emperor. This remaining western or wailing wall was later to be confused with the western wall of the Haram el-Sharif and, in the process of time, the worship of the Jews would transfer from the former to the latter.

We will see in the sixth century that the Byzantine emperor Justinian would build an enormous church, the Church of Mary (Nea Church), on the southern end of the Haram near where the Al Aqsa mosque would be built a century later after the Arab conquest. The Church of Mary would be so big that the Haram would be extended 130 feet south to accommodate it. Justinian saw himself as a great builder like Solomon and this church began to also be called Solomon's Temple beginning the process that led to the acceptance of the site as where the Temple originally stood.

We will look at the process of how the Muslims came to build the Al Aqsa mosque and the Dome of the Rock on the Haram after the Arab conquest in the seventh century. The second Caliph, Omar, took a portable stone from the Jewish area where he was accurately told the Jews believed Solomon's Temple was built and moved that to the Al Aqsa mosque. He felt that it transferred the holiness to where he built his new mosque. Just as Justinian called the Church of Mary, Solomon's Temple, Omar also began to call his new mosque, the Al Aqsa mosque, Solomon's Temple.

Originally the quibla, the holy stone, pointing the Muslims in the direction of Mecca of where they were to pray was at the Al Aqsa mosque and Omar thought little of the site of the Dome of the Rock having previously been a christian site with a Byzantine church on it. The Dome of the Rock was built 50 years later another Muslim Caliph, Abd al-Malik. Part of his reasoning for building on the site of the Rock was to lure christians away from worshipping at the site where Jesus' footprints were supposedly embedded in the Rock. Later Muslim traditions of Mohammed's ascension from it and many others were added in centuries afterwards. That massive oblong rock features in the descriptions of Fort Antonio and is completely absent in the biblical and extra-biblical descriptions of the true Temple of God.

Documents from the Geniza library show there were 70 Jewish families that petitioned Omar to live in Jerusalem at this time. They specifically wanted to be close to the Temple and said it was in the south of the city near the waters of Siloam i.e. in the original City of David, not the Haram. For the next 400 years the original City of David on the SE spur to the south of the "Temple Mount" area became the "Jewish Quarter" during the early Islamic occupation of Jerusalem.

A series of events occurred in the eleventh century that led to the abandonment of Jerusalem by the Jews for a period of 50 years. In 1033 a major earthquake occurred that devastated the wall protecting the southeastern region of the city. In 1067 after another major earthquake the pure waters of the Gihon Spring turned bitter and unpalatable for drinking. This had occurred once before in the time of Jeremiah (**Jeremiah 2:18-19**). Like it was in Jeremiah's time, this was taken as a sign of God's displeasure and the lack of clean water forced the Jews to re-evaluate where they should abide.

In 1071 Jerusalem was conquered by the Seljuk Turks and in 1077 the Jews moved the Jewish Academy to Tyre and then Damascus. Then, in 1099 the European Crusaders took control of Jerusalem and the Jews were persecuted even more. They lost all possessions in Jerusalem and were banned from entering Jerusalem for the next 50 years.

We have records from various Christian and Jewish authorities over the centuries such as Sophronius (638), Rabbi David Kimchi (1235) and Azariah De Rossi (1577) that all state that no Gentiles ever built any buildings or churches on the true site of where Solomon's Temple stood. Indeed we will also look at eyewitness accounts that speak of the utter desolation of the true site hundreds of years after the Romans destroyed the Temple and that it was a field where animals grazed which is something that could never have been said of the place most people today refer to as the "Temple Mount" with its stone foundation that has continued to exist from the time of Christ. The true site on the SE spur in the City of David was even used as a dump and a place of refuse.

Jewish attention only began to be turned to the "Temple Mount" as the true site starting with Benjamin of Tudela in 1169 after the 50 year period when no Jew set foot inside of Jerusalem and they began to lose sight of the true geographical knowledge about Jerusalem.

At that time they thought they had discovered the tombs of David and the kings of Judah on the southwestern hill of Jerusalem and began to question the validity of the SE spur as the original City of David, not realizing that Simon the Hasmonean began a new and different Zion there similar to New York being a new city named after York in England and that Simon had moved the graves out of the old city to new graves. In this so-called grave they found what they thought were the remains of a synagogue with a niche that was pointed towards the Haram el-Sharif and the Dome of the Rock. Since Jewish tradition stated that early synagogues were pointed toward the Temple it was surmised that the Dome of the Rock was where the Temple originally stood. More recent archaeology has shown the ruins to be that of an early church.

No Jew ever pointed out the present Wailing Wall as the place where Jews should assemble until the infamous Rabbi Luria in the sixteenth century. He was a mystic who had great visions. The great "Ari" told Rabbi Abraham to pray at the Wailing Wall and that God's divine presence was behind it and as a sign this was true said that Rabbi Abraham would live 22 years more. He died 22 years later and this sign sealed the deal as the true site of the Temple.

It wasn't until the Jewish enlightenment 200 years later that Judaism pulled out of his Kabbalistic false teachings. While the Jews moved on from his Kabbalistic teachings this identification given through false visions was not corrected and the Wailing Wall is still looked on as the last remaining wall of the true Temple complex and they mistakenly believe, as we will see, that the Dome of the Rock stands on the site of Solomon's Temple.

In the second part of this presentation we will look at where Jesus Christ really was crucified, buried and resurrected.

We will begin by examining a crucial key to the geography of where Christ was crucified given by Paul in **Hebrews 13:12-13**. He was crucified both "outside the gate" – outside the walls of Jerusalem and "outside the camp" which we will discover was a specific distance around 3000 feet outside the walls of Jerusalem.

This theoretically rules out the two major contenders that claim to be the place of the crucifixion. The traditional Catholic and Orthodox place, the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, is in the NW of the Old City, which at the time of Christ was just outside of its NW wall. It also theoretically rules out the traditional site believed by Protestants – the "skull hill" near the Garden Tomb just to the north of the Damascus Gate just outside the northern wall of the Old City.

We will then look at the clues from the symbolism of the Temple and the Garden of Eden, as well as the historical symbolism of the Chinese Border Sacrifice which carries on the same symbolism – that is, that the Saviour, as a sin offering, was offered east of the Temple where God faced east.

When the Israelites brought their offerings to the tabernacle in the wilderness they brought it to the door that led into the tabernacle. The only door into the tabernacle where only the priests could enter was at the east side. The Holy of Holies faced eastwards and the tribe of Judah, from which Jesus came from, was in the primary position to the east of the tabernacle.

The sin offerings, the goat that was killed on the Day of Atonement and the Red Heifer were all slain on the altar within the precincts of the Temple and its blood was sprinkled before the inner curtain of the Temple. The tossing of the blood money by Judas symbolized this sprinkling.

The dead bodies of the sin offerings, the goat that was killed on the Day of Atonement and the Red Heifer were all taken east outside the camp and burnt in their entirety. Jesus Christ symbolized all these offerings and evidence will be shown that Jesus was likewise led out from Jerusalem east and crucified near the Miphkad altar on the southern summit on the Mount of Olives where those offerings were destroyed.

We will see that this place fits the requirements for both a Jewish and Roman execution. Stoning of individuals had to occur outside the camp (**Numbers 15:35-36**). The Romans generally crucified criminals at the place of where the crime took place or where the criminal was arrested.

We will see that this place also fits the description of being the Place of the Skull. The Hebrew word, Golgotha, also means head. The Miphkad altar gets its name from being the place where censuses were done and Miphkad means numbering. Golgotha means place of the head i.e. where head counting or numbering was done. There are also traditions that state that Adam's skull was buried on the Mount of Olives by Noah's son, Shem.

One of the signs that occurred when Christ died was the tearing of the curtain. The gospels give good reason to believe that the centurion and those around Christ at the time could see the curtain being torn. To see the curtain one would have to be in an easterly direction from the Temple.

We will also look at another geographical key referred to in the Gospel of John as the Place of the City which was close to the crucifixion site as well as looking at the significance of the signs that followed Christ's death. We will also look at the true location of the events that followed Christ's arrest. We will see that Annas' and Caiphas' Holy Day residences and the Sanhedrin meeting hall were all inside the Temple and we have touched on where Pilate tried Jesus in Fort Antonio.

Following that we will look at the importance of the Mount of Olives to the early first century church and the cave / tomb that was very highly regarded. In time the Mount of Olives came to be seen as a new Mount Zion in a similar way that Simon the Hasmonean referred to the SW hill as a new Zion. With the departure of the Shekinah glory from the Temple to the Mount of Olives during the Roman siege the Mount of Olives took on great significance to the early church and the cave / tomb they believed Christ was buried nearby the crucifixion site.

We will then look at how Constantine's mother Helena was duped into believing the site of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, that was later built there, was the crucifixion site.

We will look at the Protestant claims that Jeremiah's Grotto (what most people today think of as Skull Hill) was the crucifixion site and that the Garden Tomb was the burial site. The tombs around the Garden Tomb have been confirmed to date from the time of Jeremiah and not the first century. Also, we are told that Peter and John had to stoop into the tomb which is not the case with the tomb at the Garden Tomb.

We will look at the symbolism of Abraham's offering of Isaac on Mount Moriah and we will see that Moriah was not just one mountain and that this event may well have occurred on the Mount of Olives.

We will look at a tale of two trees and discover what the two trees of the Garden of Eden may well have been. Christ cursed one type of tree and was crucified very nearby on a different type of tree that symbolized the tree of life. We will see the symbolism of the crucifixion and the menorah and the Day of Atonement symbolism between Jesus Christ and Barabbas who's first name was also Jesus.

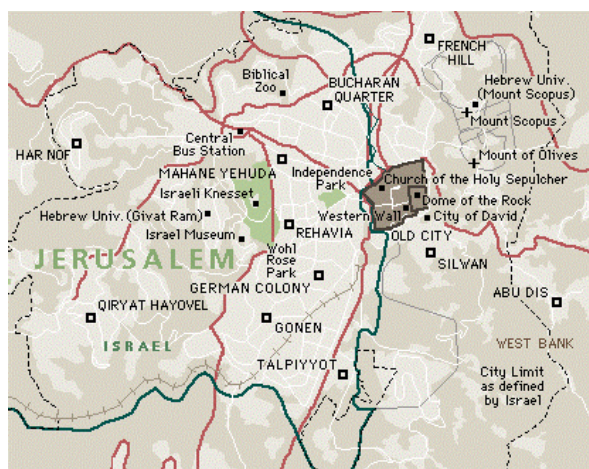
We will finish the second part of this presentation with a deeper look at the symbolism surrounding Christ's death, burial and resurrection as well as putting all the pieces together and cover step by step the events of the last week of Christ to His burial and the events after His resurrection from a more accurate historical point of view based on what we will learn in this presentation.

The third and final part of this presentation will be a continuation of the first part where will come up to the present and cover events in the Holy Land and the prophecies of a future Temple to be built by the Jews and how the lost knowledge we have covered in this presentation may have a bearing on future Temple prophecies. Following that we will finish off by looking at the prophecies of the millennial Temple to be built after Christ's return and the prophecies of the New Jerusalem.

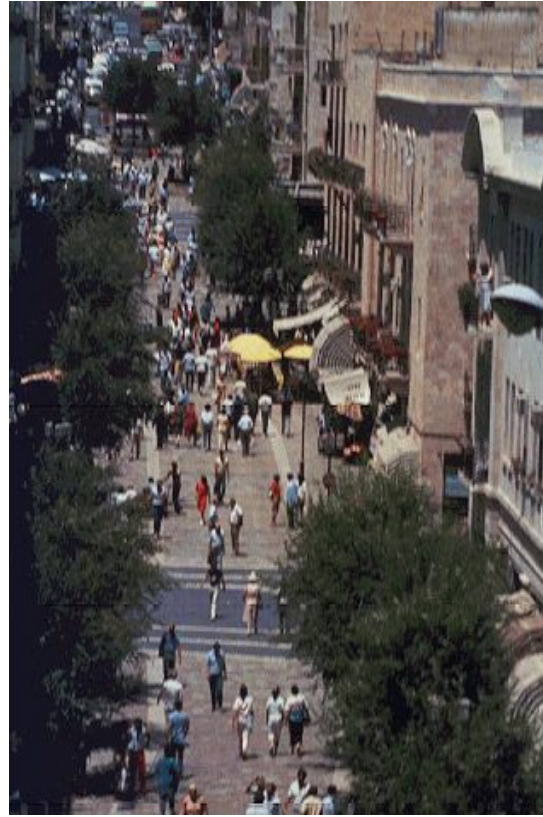
The city of Jerusalem is located in the south east of the land of Israel relatively high compared to the coastal plain. Its eastern side is located relatively close to the Judean wilderness in the SE which borders the Dead Sea further to the east. The following maps show the location of Jerusalem within the land of Israel.



These next two maps show the old city in the east and the new suburbs in the west which are particularly green compared to the Judean wilderness to the SE of Jerusalem.



The newer western suburbs are quite green and modern. The following photos show some of the trendy downtown streets such as Ben Yehudah street where there are many great cafes and restaurants.



The picture below shows another example of how modern the new city is with a McDonalds store. Hebrew is written from right to left not left to right like English. Notice the McDonalds sign in Hebrew which is back to front. I got quite a laugh out of this with when I first visited Israel.



The following are two aerial views of the Old City of Jerusalem.

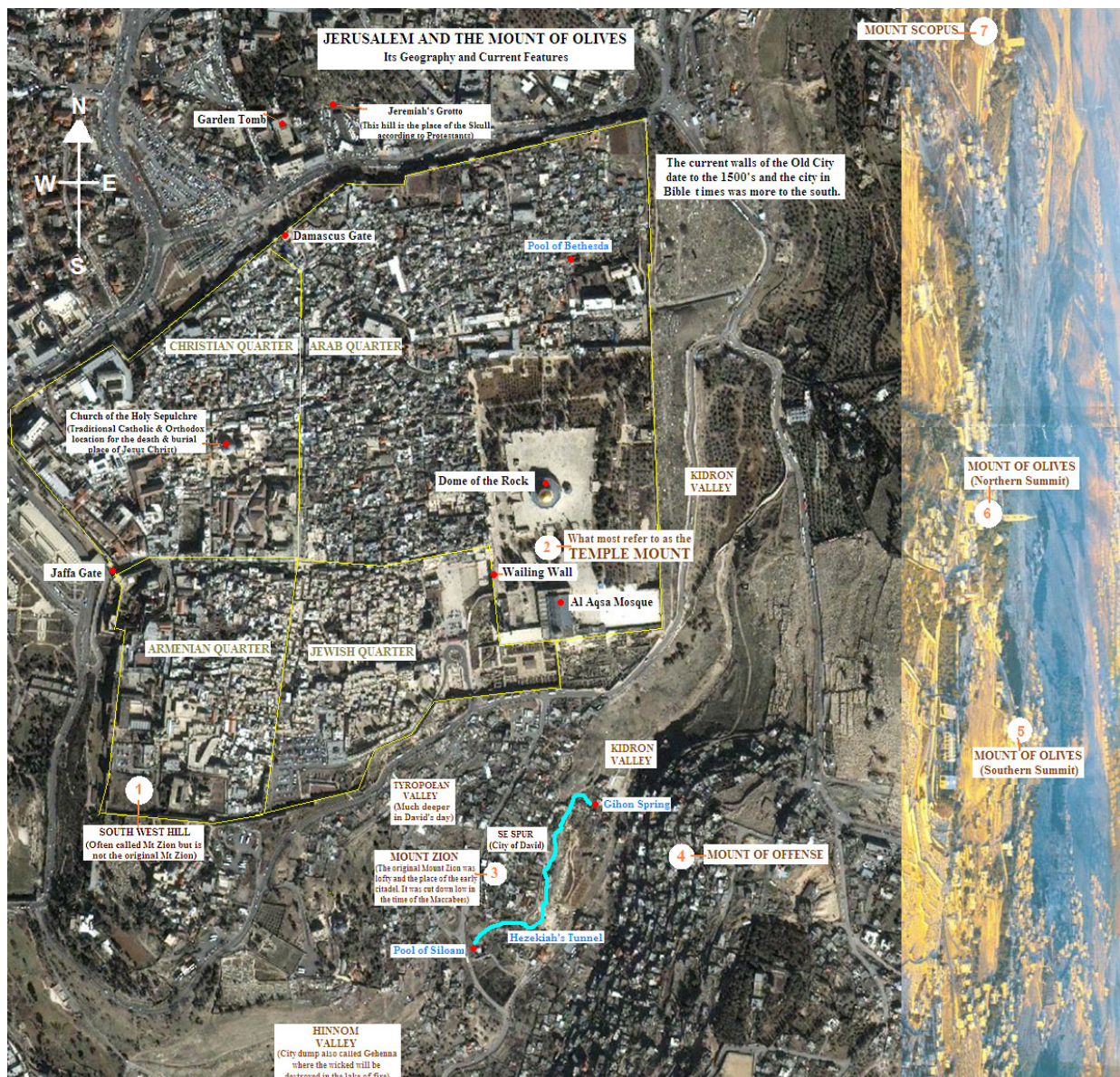


The following is an overhead view of the key geographical features of Jerusalem. Notice that Jerusalem has seven hills similar to Rome.

The current walls of the Old City are not the same walls that existed at the time of Christ. The current walls which are a fair bit more to the north of the walls of Jesus' day were constructed in the 1500's at the time that the Ottoman Turk empire controlled Jerusalem.

Notice that the Old City is divided into four quarters. The top left quarter (NW) is the Christian Quarter where the Church of the Holy Sepulchre is. The top right quarter (NE) is the Arab Quarter which has the Dome of the Rock. The Armenian Quarter is in the SW and the SE quarter is the Jewish Quarter where the Wailing Wall is.

Take note of the main features in this overhead aerial photo of Jerusalem. Now we'll do a bit of a tour of them in a clockwise direction starting with the Jaffa Gate in the west of the city.



This is the Jaffa Gate in the west of the city. The only car road through the Old City enters here and goes south through the Armenian quarter and through the Zion Gate in the south.



From the Jaffa Gate you can purchase a ticket to go walking around on top of the city's walls. Next to the Jaffa Gate is the Tower of David museum. It's not where David's citadel was but it is a fine museum and offers a wonderful view across the whole of the Old City to the Dome of the Rock and the Mount of Olives.



As you enter the narrow cobblestone streets of the Old City you are overwhelmed by the wonderful markets and aromatic spices of the Old City.



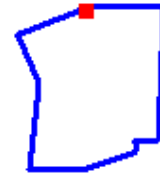
I was very impressed with the old world charm of the Old City with its beautifully well-kept cobblestone streets and its markets. It was especially charming at night. It combines the best of Jewish culture who take pride in its appearance and look after it well (especially when compared to Arab cities I've travelled to) and it has the best of Arab culture with their wonderful markets and spices.



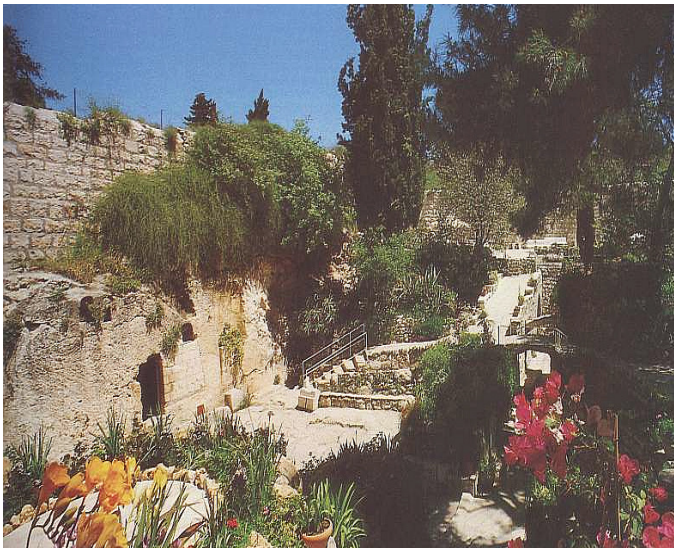
The Church of the Holy Sepulchre in the NW Christian Quarter is the traditional Catholic and Orthodox site for the crucifixion, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Within the church is an earlier church which supposedly contains the tomb of Christ.



The Damascus Gate is in the north of the city which is very close to the traditional crucifixion and burial site of Jesus Christ according to Protestants.



The Garden Tomb is the traditional Protestant site for the burial site of Jesus Christ. It is owned by a British foundation and it really is a beautiful, peaceful site perfect for meditation and Bible study.



Right next to the Garden Tomb is Jeremiah's Grotto or Skull Hill which is the traditional Protestant site for the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. It does have some striking erosional features which first drew attention to it as a possible location of the true Golgotha. The hill is at the back of a bus station. It is a very short distance from the northern wall of the Old City.



On the east side of the city is the accepted Temple Mount site where the Dome of the Rock and the Al Aqsa mosque are located.



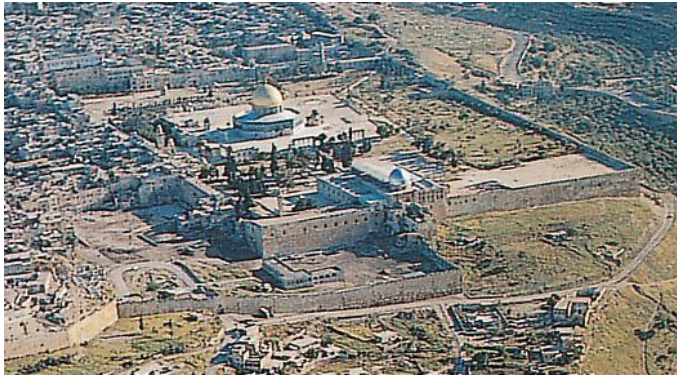
Very close to but below the Dome of the Rock is the Western Wall of the accepted Temple Mount complex known also as the Wailing Wall which is the holiest place for Jews supposedly being the last remaining wall of the Temple of God before it was destroyed by the Romans.



Here's another view with both the Dome of the Rock and the Wailing Wall. The big courtyard in front of the Wailing Wall was created in 1967 after the Jews took control of the Old City and demolished a number of buildings in front of it. To the south of both the Wailing Wall and the accepted Temple Mount complex are ruins excavated during archaeological digs in the 1970's by the Israeli archaeological authorities which involved Ernest Martin and many Ambassador College students.



Here are some pre-dig photos of the same area dated to the late 1960's.



During the dig a massive set of stairs on the outside of the wall where the Al Aqsa mosque is were uncovered as well as the ruins of two palatial buildings from the time of the Umayyad rulers, Arab rulers from around 700 AD.



To the east of Jerusalem and the Dome of the Rock is the Mount of Olives which offers a panoramic view of the Old City. The main feature that stands out in the view are the walls of the accepted Temple Mount.



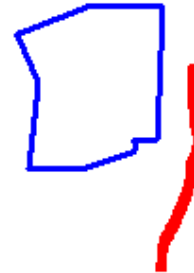
The Mount of Olives is actually a double mountain with a northern summit (where the Church of the Ascension is with its distinctive tower) and a southern summit (which will feature prominently in our exploration of the true crucifixion site). That it's a double mountain is quite interesting in light of the prophecy in Zechariah 14:4 which says that the mountain will be split in two with half moving north and half of it moving south.



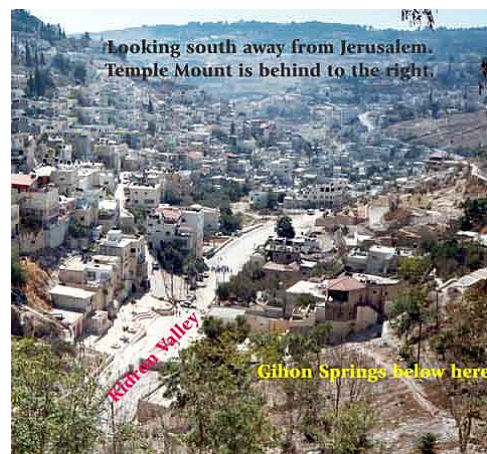
At the eastern base is the Church of All Nations which has an olive grove within its ground and is reputed to be the Garden of Gethsemane.



Between the accepted Temple Mount and the Mount of Olives lies the Kidron Valley.



Near the bottom of the Kidron Valley down from the original City of David (south of the Dome of the Rock and the Al Aqsa mosque) is the Gihon Spring which will figure very prominently in our search for the true Temple site.



Going from the Gihon Spring under the southern half of the City of David to the Pool of Siloam is a marvel of seventh century BC engineering called Hezekiah's tunnel.



At the southern end of Hezekiah's tunnel is the Pool of Siloam.



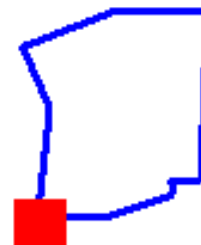
To the south of the original City of David is the Hinnom Valley, also referred to as Gehenna which Christ said would be the place where the Lake of Fire would be where Satan and the demons and the incorrigibly wicked will be cast into and burned to ashes (**Matthew 10:28**). It was also the scene of some of the most hideous religious rituals where children were sacrificed to Baal by being placed on a burning hot Baal statue and burned to death with the cries downed out by Tophet drums.



This is Hell. Jesus said that the place where the incorrigibly wicked would be burnt up was Gehenna which was also known as the Valley of Hinnom just south of the old city of Jerusalem. It was the city dump and where criminals and rubbish were burnt up.



Finally we come to the SW hill which was known as the Upper City in Jesus' day where the most wealthy residences were and which mistakenly has also become known as Mount Zion, though archaeologists now know the original Mount Zion was the SE spur south of the Dome of the Rock that was the original City of David.



PART ONE: WHERE WERE THE TEMPLES OF GOD LOCATED?

The Impressiveness of the Temple Mount complex (The “Haram esh-Sharif”)

When a visitor to Jerusalem goes up to the Mount of Olives and looks at the view of Jerusalem to the west one place dominates the view and that is what has been called the Temple Mount complex, a rectangular area in the SE corner of the old city of Jerusalem. It's eastern walls dominate the view of Jerusalem.

Within this impressive rectangular complex are found the Dome of the Rock with its golden dome (the gold sheeting was added only a few decades ago) and the Al Aqsa mosque at the very south of the Temple Mount complex. The Arab name for the complex is the Haram esh-Sharif which means the Noble enclosure. Ernest Martin writes:

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...

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*, p.61,215).

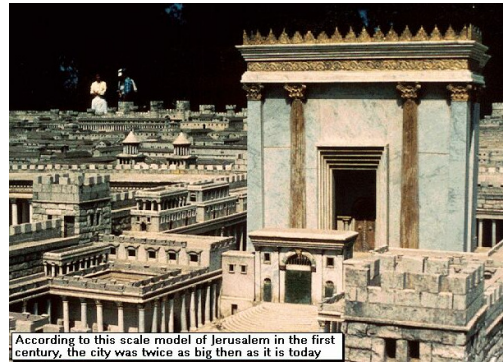
To extend by extrapolation the number of stones making up the eastern, southern and western walls surrounding the Haram (there is little left of the northern wall), there has to be about 8,000 to 10,000 Herodian and pre-Herodian stones still in place as they were some 2000 years ago. Here I will state 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 (**The Temples That Jerusalem Forgot [referred to as “Temples” in my references from here on], p.12).**

The Prophecies of Jesus about the Destruction of the Temple and Jerusalem

Jesus gave a dramatic prophecy at the beginning of **Matthew 24** about the complete destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem. In **verses 1 and 2** we read:

Then Jesus went out and departed from the temple, and His disciples came up to show Him the buildings of the temple. And Jesus said to them, 'Do you not see all

these things? Assuredly, I say to you, not *one* stone shall be left here upon another, that shall not be thrown down.' (**repeated in Mark 13:1-2 and Luke 21:5-6**).



Ernest Martin makes these comments about the prophecies of Jesus regarding the destruction of the Temple:

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.

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**)

Another explanation given is that the rest of the destruction of the Temple including the Wailing Wall would occur in the end-time at the hands of the beast power.

That Jesus is specifically referring to the complete destruction caused by the Romans in **70 AD** is shown by another prophecy. Jesus not only prophesied that the Temple would be completely destroyed but that the whole of Jerusalem would also be completely destroyed where not one stone would be found upon another.

In **Luke 19:41-44** Jesus said:

“Now as He drew near, He saw the city and wept over it, saying, ‘If you had known, even you, especially in this your day, the things *that make* for your peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. For days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment around you, surround you and close you in on every side, and level you, and your children within you, to the ground; and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not know the time of your visitation.”



Jesus prophesied that every structure of Jewish Jerusalem would be completely leveled to the ground to bedrock. He left us with no ambiguity. If one is honest with the gospels nothing inside and out was to be left of the Temple and Jewish Jerusalem according to Jesus' prophecies.

Did Jesus' prophecies fail? We must conclude that Jesus was wrong if the Haram was where the Temple stood. What do the eyewitnesses of the first century have to say about the accuracy of Jesus' prophecies?

The Prophecies of Jesus Fulfilled to the Letter

Ernest Martin says the following about how modern scholars treat the eyewitness accounts of Josephus:

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...

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) (**Temples, p.13, 18**).

Let's notice what Josephus said about the state of Jerusalem during the war with the Romans in **70 AD**. We should pay attention to what he stated he saw, and also what he left out.

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 [in the west side NOT the Haram] 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; **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...

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 Judea 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] (Wars of the Jews, VII.1,1 & VI.1,1 - Temples, p.14-15).

The three mighty Jewish defensive towers in the south-west in the area known as the Upper City Titus initially thought to spare to both show how mighty a feat it was for them to defeat the Jews with such defences and to use to build a new Roman camp.

This camp, however, never eventuated. There are no archaeological remains of there ever being a camp in the Upper City. There already was another Roman camp that Titus chose to take advantage of and the three remaining towers and the rest of the western wall in the SW of the city were demolished.

Another eyewitness of the destruction of Jerusalem was Eleazar, the Jewish commander at Masada. In AD 73, three years after the war was finished in Jerusalem, he stated:

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...

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 (**Wars of the Jews VII.8,7 – Temples, p.29**) .

Notice that he plainly states that the very foundations of the Holy Temple were dug up! The foundations of the Haram are still there for all to see and cannot be the site of the Temple.

The Haram was the Roman camp. Fort Antonio occupied the whole of the Haram. The former Roman camp had not been a reservoir of hidden gold before the war in which Jews could hide their precious things and so did not have to be demolished. The Temple also acted as a treasury for gold and this is part of the reason it was dug up to its foundations.

Eleazar states the only thing left in the area was the Roman camp. Everything of Jewish Jerusalem was utterly destroyed! Even the Jewish towers that Titus initially thought to leave and re-build into a Roman camp were destroyed.

The Roman camp on the Haram was officially reckoned as being beyond and outside the limits of Jewish Jerusalem. It was NOT recognized as being part of the municipality of Jerusalem.

Ernest Martin writes the following about Titus' plans for the Roman defensive structures after the War:



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: Phasaël, 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 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."

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?...

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"...

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 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 (**Temples, p.40-43**).

The Largeness of Fort Antonia

How big was the Roman fortress known as Fort Antonia? How big were typical Roman camps of the time? G.J. Wightman states in his book *The Walls of Jerusalem*, that a typical Roman camp had:

a typically square plan and **enclosed an area of about 400 x 500 meters [1250 by 1600 feet]**. Roman military camps were 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 (p.195).



How do those dimensions compare with the dimensions of the Haram and the Temple? The Haram is not a perfect rectangle. It is a trapezium and its dimensions compare very favourably with that of a typical Roman camp.

The sides of the Haram measure 1041 feet (N), 929 feet (S), 1596 feet (W) and 1556 feet (E).

The dimensions of the Haram are quite different to those recorded for us by Josephus. Josephus tells us that the dimensions of the Temple walls were much smaller than the dimensions of the Haram.

Josephus tells us that the Temple walls formed a perfect square which were 600 feet for each side (*Antiquities of the Jews*, XV.11,3 – Temples, p.451).

Josephus states 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 [originally it began as fortress built by the Jewish Hasmoneans], but afterwards took this new name under [Mark] Antony's supremacy (*Wars of the Jews*, V,5,4 – Temples, p.58) .

Josephus said that when the Romans built a fortification to house their Legions, they were actually constructing "a city" (*Wars of the Jews*, V.2.3).

Let's notice how Josephus describes Fort Antonio and how he describes a fortress FAR bigger than the small fortress imagined by scholars in the NW corner of the Haram which barely would contain 500 soldiers let alone a full legion of 5 000 men as such Roman camps supported.

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 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 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...so did it adjoin to the new city, and was the only place that hindered the sight of the Temple on the north (**Wars of the Jews V.5,8 – Temples p.61-62**).

Josephus said that “it might seem to be composed of several cities” it was so large. It was also built on a large rock. The Haram does have a large conspicuous rock and that is the rock underneath the Dome of the Rock.

Such a rock is completely absent in all descriptions of the Temple over the ages. If the Temple stood near the Dome of the Rock then surely this conspicuous rock would have been referred to in descriptions of the Temple.

Ernest Martin makes these comments about the size of Fort Antonio and the number of Roman troops that would have been stationed there:

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:

"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 (**Wars of the Jews, V.2,3**)."

It was normal procedure for Roman Camps (and permanent fortresses - as Fort Antonia certainly was) to garrison a full legion of troops. 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...

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)...

Fort Antonia was so large in size that Josephus reckoned it like several cities, located in a rectangular walled area...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."

Note the comments of Professor John E. Stambaugh on the citylike 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"...

The major body of Roman troops was quartered [at] the encampment referred to in the Book of Acts, and called the Praetorium in the Gospel of John.

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 took up conducted most governmental activities" (**Temples, p.56-57, 63**).

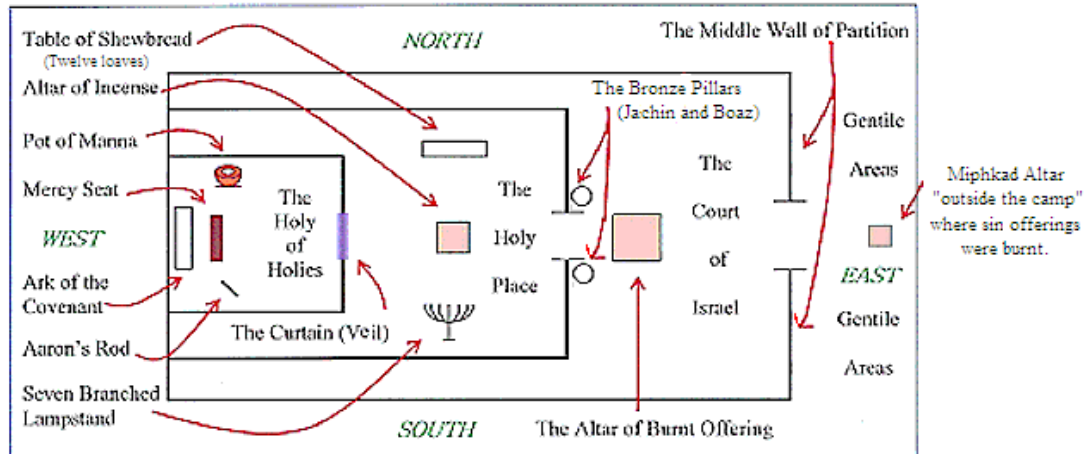
The Symbolism of the Earthly and Heavenly Temples

Let's now look at the symbolism of the Temple. To better understand the history of the Temples and to find clues to help us better determine where they really stood we need to understand the symbolism behind each of the features in the tabernacle and the more permanent Temple of God that later took its place in Jerusalem.

In **Hebrews 9** Paul goes into much detail about the Temple and the objects within it and their symbolism and how it fits in with the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Speaking of the Temple in Jerusalem he writes:

Therefore *it was necessary* that **the copies of the things in the heavens** should be purified with these, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. For Christ has not entered the holy places made with hands, **which are copies of the true**, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us (**Hebrews 9:23-24**).

The Temple and the objects therein we are told are copies of things which are in heaven. The Temple on earth in Jerusalem was patterned after things in heaven.



In the innermost chamber of the Temple in Jerusalem, the Holy of Holies, where only the High Priest could enter once a year on the Day of Atonement, there were three holy objects. Those three objects were:

- 1] The ark of the covenant (which included its golden lid called the mercy seat)
- 2] Aaron's rod which budded miraculously
- 3] The pot of manna



In John's vision in the Book of Revelation we read:

Then the **temple of God was opened in heaven**, and the **ark of His covenant** was seen in His temple (**Revelation 11:19**).

We see the Temple of God and the ark of the covenant in heaven of which the Temple in Jerusalem and the ark that the Israelites carried from Sinai into Palestine were but mere copies of.

To the church in Ephesus Jesus promised:

To him who overcomes I will give to eat from **the tree of life**, which is in the **midst** of the Paradise of God (**Revelation 2:7**).

In the very midst of heaven, corresponding to the Holy of Holies, is the tree of life. Aaron's rod that miraculously budded symbolised the tree of life.

To the church in Pergamos Jesus promised:

To him who overcomes I will give some of the **hidden manna** to eat (**Revelation 2:17**).

This is probably a reference to manna in the heavenly temple. Symbolically the manna sustains life. This emphasises that God is the Creator, the living God who is the only one who gives and sustains life.

To the church in Philadelphia Jesus promised:

He who overcomes, I will make him a **pillar** in the temple of My God, and he shall go out no more. And I will write on him the name of My God and the name of the city of My God, **the New Jerusalem**, which comes down out of heaven from My God (**Revelation 3:12**).

The Temple of God in the New Testament takes on another meaning where it is used as a description for the church in which the Holy Spirit dwells. The reference to being a pillar in that Temple of God refers to playing an important part in the ruling government of God after God's kingdom comes to this earth at Jesus Christ's return.

The term Temple is used figuratively here for the church, though He goes on to speak of the New Jerusalem which will be a literal city that comes down from heaven wherein the Father and Jesus Christ will dwell.

While there will be a millennial Temple on earth when Jesus Christ reigns (**Ezekiel 40-48**), after the New Jerusalem descends we read that there will no longer be a physical temple once the plan of God is complete on earth and the divisions or degrees of separation symbolised by the Temple are no longer needed as physical reminders. John writes the following as he sees the New Jerusalem:

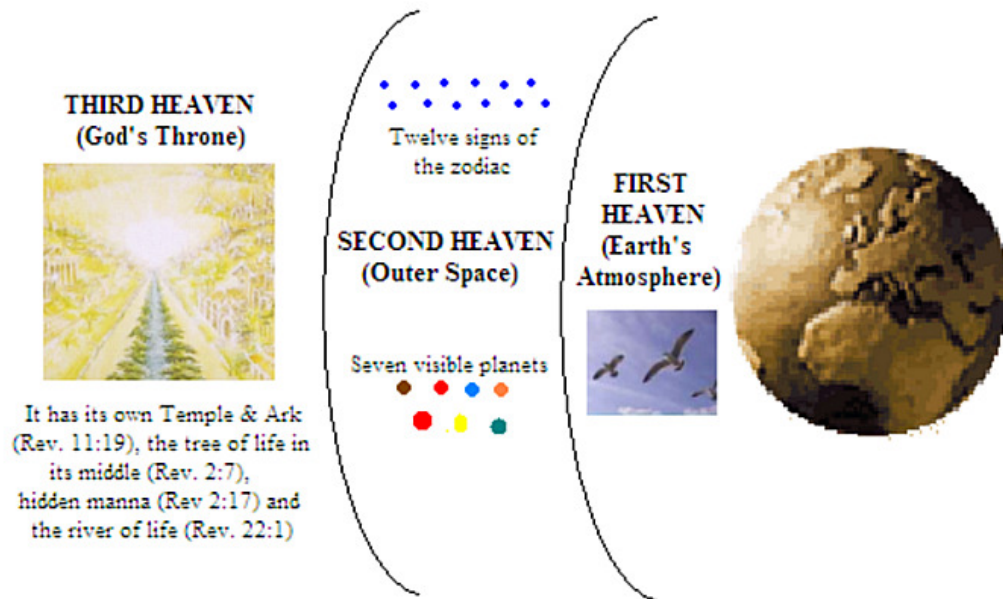
But I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple (**Revelation 21:22**).

We read about one particular feature that we will see is a very important clue in determining the true location of the Temples in Jerusalem.

And he showed me a **pure river of water of life**, clear as crystal, **proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb** (**Revelation 22:1**).

A pure river of water or a spring proceeds forth from the very throne of God. The throne of God here is located above a spring. This symbolism provides a very important clue as we dig further into history and determine the true location of the Temples in Jerusalem.

Another way we see this pattern between what is on earth and what is in the heavens is in the comparison between the three general compartments within the Temple and the three heavens noted in scripture.



This is what Ernest Martin writes about the similarities between the three compartments of the Temple and the three heavens:

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...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 **2 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 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 us this curtain had the principal stars of the heavens displayed on it in tapestry form. 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 [visible] 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 (**Temples, p.253**).

In addition to the symbolism of the three compartments of the tabernacle and Temples, according to Ernest Martin, there was also an astronomical pattern in the design of the camp in the wilderness and where each of the tribes of Israel were placed in relation to the tabernacle. This pattern was also established around the environs of Jerusalem itself. Ernest Martin writes the following about the position of the tribes around the tabernacle:

Though the Holy Scriptures in other areas utterly condemn the use of Astrology as conceived by the Gentiles and when the celestial motions are used for wrong purposes (**Isaiah 47:11-13**), the placement of the twelve tribes of Israel around the Tabernacle was intended by Moses to provide the authorities in Israel with a knowledge of God's plan for the nation of Israel, both for its present existence and what will happen to Israel in the future...The Gentiles actually corrupted the prophetic teaching found in the design of the "Camp of Israel" and placed on it a hodgepodge of heathen interpretations that completely obliterated the true prophetic meaning that God gave to Moses...

So, what about this astronomical design of the "Camp"? The outer boundary of this zodiacal design was an imaginary circle positioned by the Jewish authorities to be 2000 cubits (a radius of about 3000 feet) from that central point in the Holy Place of the Temple. It is important to realize that the outer boundary of this circle denoted the limits of the "Camp."

Moses positioned each of the twelve tribes of Israel as representing a particular zodiacal sign in its regular astronomical order.

The tribe of Judah was given the prime position in this zodiacal design by being located directly east of the entrances to the Tabernacle and the later Temples. Let me explain. Four principal tribes were selected to denote each of the four seasons of the year. Judah was first, Dan was second, Reuben was third and Ephraim was fourth. The positions of these four prime tribes were arranged 90 degrees from each other (within a 360 degrees circle) to accord with those four seasons of the year. Judah was selected to be the tribe directly east of the Tabernacle and it was given first place...

The zodiacal story is a prophetic account that actually centers on the Messiah of Israel who was destined to come from the tribe of Judah. For this reason, Judah was

reckoned as the chief tribe and it was located in Moses' arrangement of the "Camp" directly east of the Temple.

The tribe of Judah had for its tribal symbol the Lion (called Leo today). Judah had a subsidiary tribe of Israel located on each of its sides. As the chief tribe, Judah (Leo) and its sign was positioned to dominate the summer season in prophetic and calendar matters...The twelve tribes in their arrangement in the encampment also represented the twelve months of the year.

The next pivotal tribe proceeding counterclockwise around this zodiacal design of this "Camp of Israel"...was Dan with a subsidiary tribe of Israel located on each of its sides. It was positioned on the north side of the Temple and Jerusalem as a venomous creature, sometimes displayed as an eagle with a snake in its talons (called Scorpio, the venomous scorpion today). It dominated the autumn season in the prophetic calendar of Israel.

Reuben...with a subsidiary tribe of Israel located on each of its sides was placed on the west side of the Temple and Jerusalem in the original arrangement. Reuben was connected with water, as a Man bearing water (called Aquarius today), and it dominated the winter season in the original prophetic calendar...

And finally there is Ephraim...with a subsidiary tribe of Israel located on each of its sides. He was on the south side of the Temple and Jerusalem as a bullock (called Taurus today). It was positioned to dominate the spring season in a prophetic and calendar sense. And, of course, if one continued...another 90 degrees, one would then return to Judah (Leo) for the start of another calendar or prophetic year...

Another form of this astronomical arrangement surrounding the Temple and Jerusalem (and patterned after God's abode in heaven) was the four sides of the cherubim mentioned by **Ezekiel (1:4-14)** and the **Book of Revelation (4:6-7)**. The cherubim were reckoned by the biblical writers as encompassing the throne of God in heaven.

These angelic cherubim also had the four zodiacal signs representing the seasons of the year associated with them (Lion, Eagle, Man, Bullock which are today called Leo, Scorpio, Aquarius, Taurus and they were analogous to the four principal tribes of Israel: Judah, Dan, Reuben and Ephraim)....

In fact, the design of the biblical Zodiac that the tribes of Israel displayed in their encampment prefigured the history of the Messiah of Israel as certainly interpreted by the early Christians...

Jesus was born of Judah (Leo the Lion, the month of Ab) and the first sign in a counterclockwise direction that anyone within the camp would encounter would be Virgo, the Virgin (Elul, the 6th Hebrew month). And certainly, Jesus was accepted by Christians as being born of a virgin.

Then, in the New Testament narrative, Jesus at the start of his ministry then met Satan for his temptation as shown by Dan (the sign of the venomous serpent or scorpion). He later came into deep waters (e.g. **Psalms 124:4**) through his apprehension, trial and crucifixion at Jerusalem (which is symbolized by Reuben, the sign of the Water Bearer a man carrying water).

But then comes the Springtime (as indicated by the Joseph tribes, particularly Ephraim, Taurus the Bull) and this represented the resurrection of Jesus from the dead.

Finally, one returns in this circular (or celestial) journey within the camp to the first part of the tribe of Judah (Leo the Lion, back to the first fifteen degrees of the month of Ab) where the chief star called Regulus the King Star is located (which happens to

be the closest star in the heavens to the ecliptic, the path of the Sun), and this represents the Christ being crowned King of Kings and sitting on the right hand of the Father, whom the Sun represents (**Malachi 4:2**).

The four cherubim which represent the four seasons (and the four principal tribes) are the primary actors in this zodiacal or celestial design of the fortunes of the Messiah within the Camp of Israel. It is reflected in the story found in **Psalm 19** where the Sun comes forth as a bridegroom and begins to tell a prophetic history that Israel can understand. Indeed, the apostle Paul quoted **Psalm 19 (Romans 10:18)** and referred it to Jesus and his message as going forth like the messages in the sun, moon and stars into all the world. The early Christians saw the astronomical message found in the zodiacal arrangement of the tribes of Israel within their encampment as giving highlights of the career of Jesus in his role as the Christ of God (**Secrets of Golgotha [referred from here on as Golgotha], p.53-60**).

E.W. Bullinger in his book "Witness of the Stars" has gone into much detail about how the plan of God can be seen in the various constellations in the heavens. One can't help but wonder about that and the evidence of design in the heavens when one sees the Southern Cross. Two of the brightest stars, Alpha and Beta Centauri, point to it and seem to highlight how Christ died on the cross to pay for our sins.

Garden of Eden Symbolism in the Temple

The symbolism of the Temple does not end with the pattern seen in the heavens. The three compartments of the Temple also correlate to the three main geographical areas of Eden as seen in the Book of Genesis.

In **Genesis 2:8** we read:

The LORD God planted **a garden eastward in Eden**, and there He put the man whom He had formed.

The Garden of Eden is not the same as the Land of Eden. It was in Eden but it was not all there was to the Land of Eden.

Continuing on in **Genesis 2:9** we read:

And out of the ground the LORD God made every tree grow that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The tree of life *was* also in the **midst of the garden**, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

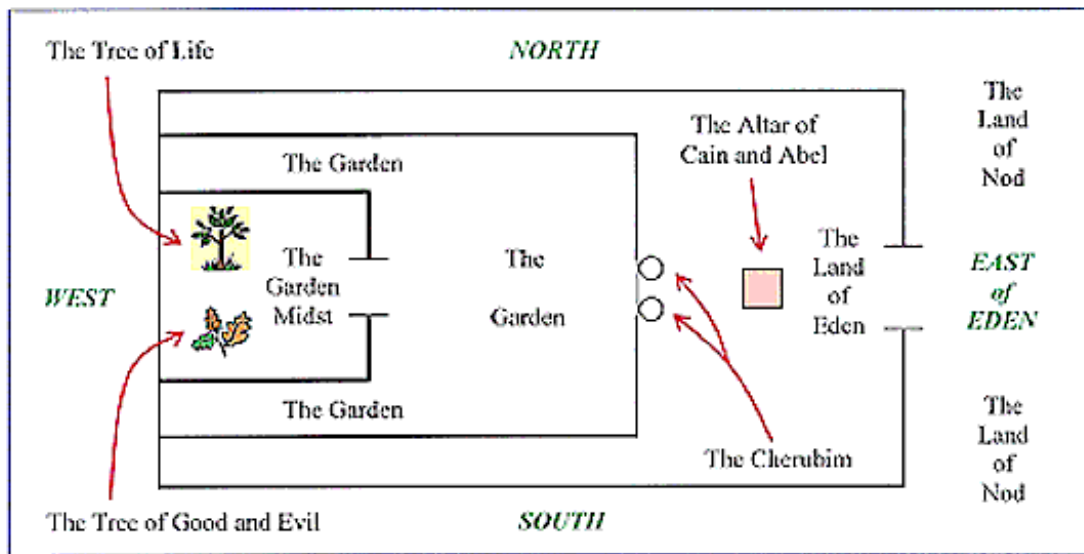
Here we have another geographical area. Within the garden of Eden is an area referred to as the midst of the garden.

The midst of the Garden of Eden corresponds to the Holy of Holies where the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil were and where Adam and Eve probably met with God.

The Garden of Eden represented the Holy Place. Following their sin of eating the forbidden fruit Adam and Eve were expelled from the Garden.

The LORD God sent him out of the garden of Eden to till the ground from which he was taken. So He drove out the man; and He placed cherubim at the **east** of the garden of Eden, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to guard the way to the tree of life (**Genesis 3:23-24**).

Adam and Eve were allowed to still live within Eden though they were no longer in the Garden of Eden. Notice that the cherubim were placed at the **EAST** of the Garden of Eden. The only entrance into the Garden of Eden was from the east. This corresponds to the fact that all the doors or entrances into the tabernacle and the Temples were at the east.



In this symbolic arrangement God always faced east. Why east? We are accustomed to orient ourselves using north as a starting point. In ancient times east was considered the starting point for such orientation. The word "orient" itself means east.

The tabernacle had two divisions (the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies) and the third division was represented by the Camp of Israel that encircled the tabernacle out to a distance of around 2000 feet from the tabernacle. The Land of Eden was represented by the Camp of Israel.

When the Temple was built there was a third division added called the Court of the Israelites. Just outside the Temple was an area called the Court of the Gentiles.

As well as the extra division built in the Temple complex there was also an area that was recognised as the Camp of Israel that encircled Jerusalem going out to a distance of 2000 feet from the Temple in all directions.

In **Genesis 4:3-4** we read:

And in the **process of time** it came to pass that Cain brought an offering of the fruit of the ground to the LORD. Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat.

These offerings probably occurred at an altar in front of the eastern entrance of the Garden of Eden. This altar would correspond to the Altar of Burnt Offering that was in front of the Holy Place. About this passage Ernest Martin writes:

Both men decided to bring offerings at a set time of the year — on a particular day. The phrase **“in process of time,”** in Hebrew, means **“at the end of days.”** It often signified the end of the agricultural (or civil) year (**1 Kings 17:7**) and was near the beginning of Autumn. Recall that the Israelites were required to appear three times in the year at the temple (**Exodus 23:14–17**). One of these occasions was **“at the end of the year” (verse 16)**. This was the season of Tabernacles. Cain brought token offerings of his crops **“at the end of days.”** This shows the brothers must have appeared before God at a precise time near the Autumn of the year (**The Temple Symbolism in Genesis**, <http://www.askelm.com/doctrine/d040301.htm>).

When Cain got angry and killed his brother Abel he was expelled from the Land of Eden:

Then Cain went out from **the presence of the LORD** and dwelt in the **land of Nod** on the **east** of Eden (**Genesis 4:16**).

Cain was cut off and outside the Camp i.e. the area represented later by the “Camp of Israel”. This area symbolically is also represented by the Court of Gentiles which was outside the entire Temple complex. Ernest Martin comments further about his expulsion:

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.”

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 from the Land of Nod back into the Land of Eden. Remember, Cain had been expelled eastward from Eden and he could not reenter 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." Jewish sources tell us that this particular altar was located some 2000 cubits east of the central part of the Temple.

In the time of Jesus, this altar was placed slightly downslope from the southern area of the Mount of Olives... 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" (Temples, p. 250-251).

Solomon carved flowers and palm trees in the walls of the Holy Place in order that the Holy Place would resemble a garden. Cherubim were also carved onto the walls because cherubim were at first associated with the Garden in Eden.

The two cherubim that guarded the entrance to the Garden of Eden were represented by the two pillars called Jachin and Boaz that were placed at the entrance of the Holy Place where only the priests could enter. Jachin means founding or foundation and Boaz means strength. Perhaps these were the names of those two cherubim that guarded the entrance of the Garden.

The Temple Symbolised the Barriers Between Man and God that God Has Broken Down Through Jesus Christ

One of the major lessons of the pattern of the tabernacle and the Temple is that sin separates us from God. In **Isaiah 59:1-2** we read:

Behold, the LORD's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; nor His ear heavy, that it cannot hear. **But your iniquities have separated you from your God;** and your sins have hidden *His* face from you.

Sin is destructive to our relationships and our relationship with God in particular. There is a price to paid when we sin and do things that hurt ourselves and other people. Separation from God and loss of true LIFE, eternal life is the price we will pay without Christ giving His life and us accepting that sacrifice in our place.

The Temple represented the degrees of separation between man and God that were created firstly with Adam and Eve's sin and expulsion from the Garden and later with Cain's sin where he was further expelled from Eden.

Israel was brought back into Eden when God chose the people of Israel with the purpose of developing them into a model nation to help draw the rest of mankind back to Him through their example.

God knew without the Holy Spirit within them they would fail to fulfill this purpose but when they are humbled in the future they will become converted with His spirit and fulfill this plan God has for them in the millennium when the Gentiles will be drawn to Him through observing God in the example of Israel in the future.

When Israel in the past did in a limited way live by God's laws Gentiles still did have the opportunity to be joined to Israel (**Isaiah 56:3-5**) even though they would not receive the Holy Spirit.

Christ was our Creator (**Ephesians 3:9**) and His life was worth more than all of mankind's put together. He paid the price of sin with His own life in order to allow us to be reconciled to God and break down all the degrees of separation that had existed and were symbolised by the pattern of the tabernacle and the Temple.

The following comes from Ernest Martin's article entitled "Temple Symbolism in Genesis" and shows how Jesus Christ's sacrifice breaks down all the degrees of separation between man and God:

Cain was sent into the land of Nod, East of Eden, away from the presence of God. He became cut off from the Eternal. God then gave him a "mark" to show that Cain was not completely forgotten and that a measure of protection would be afforded him and his descendants. Cain became a representative of *all* Gentiles. They were reckoned as being in Nod (wandering — without a fixed spiritual home). And while they could approach the East entrance to Eden, they could not go in. A barrier was placed around Eden. The altar which Cain and Abel constructed in the area of Eden near the East gate (door) of the Garden was out of bounds to those who lived in Nod...

The Israelites were reckoned as being in Eden like Adam and Eve were. However, even the privileged nation could only go to the East entrance to the Holy Place — which represented the Garden. Into the Holy Place (the Garden) only the Aaronic priests could go at the time of the morning and evening (the cool of the day) sacrifices. And even the priests were barred from entering "**the midst of the Garden**" — the Holy of Holies. They were only able to get close to the curtain that separated the outer Garden from its midst.

Only once in the year was anyone allowed to enter the Holy of Holies. On the Day of Atonement the High Priest, after many ceremonies of purification, and after he clouded the entire inner chamber with incense so that the mercy seat would be hidden from view, was able to push the curtain aside and briefly step into the inner sanctum. After he did his required duties, the curtain came down once again, and the Holy of Holies (the midst of the Garden) became closed for another year. This showed that while the tabernacle stood, God still reckoned barriers between Himself and mankind.

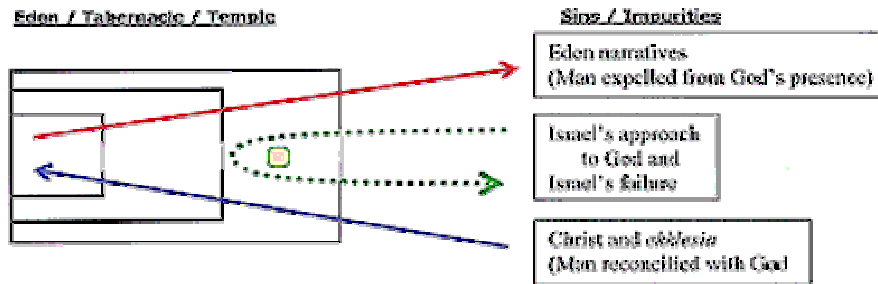
While Adam and Eve before they sinned were able to witness God's presence, their sins caused them to be sent from the Garden (the Holy Place). Cain and his descendants were sent further East — they were expelled from Eden and went to Nod. But when the Flood came the Garden, the altar, Eden, etc. all disappeared from earth. Mankind now found itself without any physical area on earth in which God dwelt. That's why the early descendants of Noah wanted to build a tower "**to reach to heaven**" (**Genesis 11:1-9**). They wanted to reach God, to have access to His heavenly presence. But God would not allow it. He had been angry with man for his ways, so He changed their languages and scattered them into all the earth. He sent all mankind into a condition of "Nod."

Finally, God selected Abraham to be the father of a nation which would be responsible for leading man (in a step-by-step way) back to God. By the time of Moses, the Abrahamic family had now reached nationhood.

Moses built the tabernacle, and Israel was brought back into Eden once again. A middle wall of partition was erected, however, that kept all Gentiles out.

God even put restrictions on Israel. Even they were told to stay out of the Holy Place (representing the Garden). The Aaronic priests were allowed to go in. But no one was permitted in the Holy of Holies except the High Priest on the Day of Atonement — and even then he (the holiest man on earth, symbolically) was not allowed to see the mercy seat. All of this shows that God still had several barriers which kept many sections of mankind away from an intimate association with Him.

Through Christ (who was the sin-offering that God first told Cain about, which God would place on the altar at the door of the Garden by grace) through *that* offering the whole barrier system was to be abolished.



Instead of a step-by-step expelling of man eastward into relative oblivion (as happened with Adam, Eve, Cain, the antediluvian world, and those at the tower of Babel), all the barriers to God as shown by the temple (and the Garden) were to be removed in Christ.

Paul said, “**The middle wall of partition**” has now been broken down (**Ephesians 2:14**). This means that the Gentiles (like Cain) who were in a state of wandering and without any fixed spiritual home, can come into the court of Israel where the altar is located. This got them back to Eden. But there is more than simply getting access to the holy altar.

Once the “**sin-offering at the door**” is accepted they can join hands with Israelites (with both peoples now called “**the new man**” — not Israelite or Gentile), and both walk up the fifteen steps into the Holy Place. [We have been made a royal priesthood — **1 Peter 2:9**] The Cherubim no longer will keep them out with their flaming sword. They are now back in the Garden from whence our first parents were expelled. But that is not the end.

When Christ died on the cross, the curtain in the temple that separated the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies (“**the midst of the Garden**”) was supernaturally torn in two from the top down (**Matthew 27:50–51**). In Hebrews we are told that the destruction of this final barrier now gives us “**boldness to enter into the holiest** [the Holy of Holies] **by the blood of Christ ... through the veil**” (**Hebrews 10:19–20**). “**Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.**” **Hebrews 4:16**

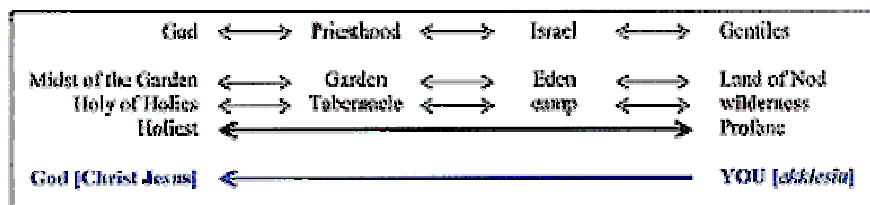
What glorious teaching! All the obstacles that God set up in a progressive sense to alienate Himself from man (in a spiritual way) from the time of Adam and Eve onward, He has systematically abolished through the work of Christ Jesus.

“**Having ABOLISHED in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances** [decrees of separation]; **for to make in himself of two one new man, so making peace.**” **Ephesians 2:15**

All the commandments and decrees which God formerly ordained to separate Himself from various peoples, have been removed in Christ. Adam and Eve, Abel and Cain, Israelite and Gentile, you and I, are now back “in the Garden” — and now in the very midst of it. We do not even have to wait for **“the cool of the day”** to come into contact with our Father. We now have a constant presence — in a spiritual sense. And the day is soon coming when we ourselves will be spirit beings (**1 Corinthians 15:42–55**).

When that day arrives, we will not only be able to talk with God face to face as did our first parents, but **“we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is”** (**1 John 3:2**). As God is Spirit, so will we be. We will then be **“as he is”** — as His own Spirit-born children. This is far more glorious than it was with our first parents. Indeed, reaching this position is the very purpose for living. Our experience with sin, with an alienation from God, with suffering, will help us for all eternity to love God our Father in a much greater way than our first parents were able to experience. What a glorious future awaits mankind through Christ.

The Holy of Holies is now open to all people on earth without social, racial, or outward religious distinction. It is Christ who has redeemed Adam and his family to Himself. Christ’s death on the cross and His resurrection from the dead are mankind’s guarantee of a certain salvation. It comes to us by God’s grace, not man’s works. One day all humanity will understand this truth...The relationships between the following schemes of progression can be understood by another diagram:



The top scheme has to do with God’s relationship with various people. It relates to the ritual system. The Gentiles could only approach God through Israel (a kingdom of priests). This will be the case even in the Millennium when the Gentiles will come to God through Israel (**Isaiah 2:2–4** and **Micah 4:1–3**).

As a result the Gentiles will not only recognize YHWH as their God, but they will begin to serve Him as well. Until Christ, Israel could only approach God through the Levites and the Priests. The Priests could only approach God at certain times and in certain places that God chose. That has ended and all requirements have been fulfilled in Christ, and God the Father can be approached, symbolically face-to-face.

For you and me the entire scheme is simplified. We can approach God directly with only one mediator, “For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus” (**1 Timothy 2:5**, see also **Galatians 3:19–24** and Hebrews chapters 8 and 9). Barriers to God no longer exist for you and for me.

Temple symbolism is fulfilled in you, not in a place, or in a scheme of boundaries, or in days of the year, or in tasks to be performed, but simply in the person of the resurrected Christ Jesus. He alone brings us directly into the presence of God the Father through the Spirit of God, **“the Power of the Highest”** (**Luke 1:35**) which comes from the Father and Christ through to you so that are now a child of God:

“You have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, ‘Abba, Father.’ The Spirit itself bears witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. Romans 8:15-17

You have every right to act and relate to other people as the child of God that you truly are, acting with love and consideration for others. It is your inheritance — realize it, embrace it, live it (**The Temple Symbolism in Genesis**, <http://www.askelm.com/doctrine/d040301.htm>).

The Symbolic Necessity of a Spring in the Temple

The Temples were a symbolic type of the Garden of Eden. The river that flowed through the Garden also had important symbolic meaning. Ernest Martin tells us of the importance of spring waters in the symbolism in the Temple:

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...

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...

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 (Temples, p.292-293).

This theme of a fountain or a water spring in Zion, representing the mountain or throne of God, is a recurring one in the Psalms of David.

Psalms 29:2-3, 9-10:

Give unto the LORD the glory due to His name; Worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness. **The voice of the LORD is over the waters;** The God of glory thunders; **The LORD is over many waters...** The voice of the LORD makes the deer give birth, and strips the forests bare; and in His temple everyone says, "Glory!" **The LORD sat enthroned at the Flood,** and the LORD sits as King forever.

Psalms 36:7-9:

How precious *is* Your lovingkindness, O God! Therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of Your wings. They are abundantly satisfied with the fullness of Your house, and **You give them drink from the river of Your pleasures.** For with You *is* the **fountain of life;** in Your light we see light.

Psalms 87:1-3, 7:

His foundation *is* in the holy mountains. The LORD loves the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob. Glorious things are spoken of you, O city of God! Selah... Both the singers and the players on instruments say, "**All my springs are in you.**"

Here we see the words from John Newton's classic hymn "Glorious Things of Thee are Spoken" (he also wrote Amazing Grace). His hymn also carries on the theme of a spring flowing from Zion with words such as "See the streams of living water springing from eternal love...Who can can faint while such a river ever flows their thirst to assuage."

Regarding the use of the plural "springs" in **Psalm 87** Ernest Martin writes:

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 **2 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" (**Temples, p.294**).

Notice now four prophecies of the Millennial Temple and the New Jerusalem that all speak of a spring or river flowing from the House or throne of God.

Ezekiel 47:1:

Then he brought me back to the door of the temple; **and there was water, flowing from under the threshold of the temple toward the east**, for the front of the temple faced east; the water was flowing from under the right side of the temple, south of the altar [the precise position where Solomon placed his 'laver'].

Zechariah 14:8-9:

And in that day it shall be *that living waters [spring waters] shall flow from Jerusalem*, half of them toward the eastern sea and half of them toward the western sea; in both summer and winter it shall occur. And the LORD shall be King over all the earth. In that day it shall be—"The LORD *is* one," and His name one.

Joel 3:18:

And it will come to pass in that day *that* the mountains shall drip with new wine, the hills shall flow with milk, and all the brooks of Judah shall be flooded with water; **a fountain shall flow from the house of the LORD** and water the Valley of Acacias.

Revelation 21:2, 6, 22:1, 17:

Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband...I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts...**And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb...** And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely.

To properly fulfill the symbolism of the Temple Ernest Martin believes that the Temples must have been located above a spring. The only spring in Jerusalem is the Gihon Spring located several hundred feet south of the Dome of the Rock and the Al Aqsa mosque along the SE spur known as the City of David. The very name for the spring "Gihon" ties its symbolism back to the Garden of Eden.

The reason the name "Gihon" was given to this natural spring is because one of the [four] rivers that fed water to the original Garden of Eden was also called the "Gihon." It has been recognized that the use of Gihon in Jerusalem was to make a symbolic connection to the Gihon River in Eden...

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"...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 (**Temples, p.254, 313**).

In **Genesis 2:10** we read:

Now a river went out of Eden to water the garden, and from there it parted and became four riverheads.

The verses after give the names of the rivers as the Pishon, Gihon, Tigris and Euphrates rivers. Now since the Tigris and the Euphrates have their sources in the mountainous region of southern Turkey, it is usually assumed by theologians today that the Garden of Eden is located in that same area. Regarding the Hebrew for the word riverhead Ernest Martin tells us:

"Where rivers came together, or a river intersected with a larger river, this juncture was called the HEAD of the river that joined the other. The word 'HEAD' did not describe the source (the beginning) of a river, but it signified a place where it intersected with another river or flowed into the ocean" (**Solving the Riddle of Noah's Flood, pp. 10-11**).

Most, though not all, rituals associated with the Temple and purification required spring waters and not merely rainwater or water from wells (cisterns).

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."

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. This was pure spring water and to a lesser degree from rivers fed by natural spring waters at their source...

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)...

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 haMelech, 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. **(Temples, p.308-313).**

Similarities between the Temple, the New Jerusalem and the Tower of Babel

We are told in Revelation 21 that the base of the New Jerusalem is 1500 miles by 1500 miles. Not only that we are also told that it is 1500 miles high. Some believe it is shaped like a pyramid because a separate measure to its overall height is given for the height of its walls which are about 20 stories high. Some believe, however, that it is cube-shaped. Symbolically this view has some support when one compares the New Jerusalem with the Temple in Herod's time.

Herod's Temple was a type of foursquare tower that rose majestically over the floors of the Kidron 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). 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 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...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 **(Temples, p.255-256).**

There are also similarities between the Tower of Babel and the Temple in Jerusalem. In **Genesis 11:4** we read:

"Come, let us build ourselves a city, and **a tower whose top is in the heavens**; let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth.

In describing Herod's Temple the first century writer Barnabas called it:

THEIR TOWER [the Temple] shall he give up to destruction; and it happened according to that which the Lord had spoken.

Ernest Martin further explains the comparisons and symbolism between the Tower of Babel and the Temples in Jerusalem:

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 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")...

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. 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."

The Temple at Jerusalem was designed by Solomon to be the center focal point for all Israelites no matter where they were 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 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. 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..."

The Tower of Babel was originally designed by its builders to be the central religious shrine for all people on earth. It was reckoned 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...

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.

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. 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 was located at Jerusalem and not in any other area of the world...

That orientation of the Temple about ten degrees north of east leads directly to the place where...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 [possibly] 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 (**Temples, p.256-260**).

David's Conquest of Jerusalem

The first name for Jerusalem was Salem. We read about Salem's early mysterious king, Melchizedek in **Genesis 16:18** where it says:

Then Melchizedek king of **Salem** brought out bread and wine; he was the priest of God Most High.

This king of Salem, Melchizedek, who met Abraham is later identified by Paul in **Hebrews 7** as the pre-incarnate Jesus Christ.

The next apparent reference to Jerusalem is in **Genesis 35:21** where we read:

Then Israel (Jacob) journeyed and pitched his tent beyond **the tower of Eder**.

Eder means flock. This tower of the flock is also referred to in **Micah 4:7-8** which says:

So the Lord will reign over them in Mount Zion from now on, even forever. And you, O **tower of the flock**, the stronghold of the daughter of Zion, to you it shall come.

The semi-circular shaped spur to the south of the area today called the Temple Mount had at the time of the patriarchs high elevation plus a perennial spring at its base. That spring was the Gihon spring.

The combination of these factors – its high elevation, cliffs on all but the north side of the spur plus the Gihon spring at its base to provide water access at a time of siege provided the security that people needed to build and to defend an important city, which the Canaanites finally called Jebus.

Where the Dome of the Rock is situated there is no spring of any kind and this is why no early settlements were made in that area north of the original Zion.



The above photo gives an excellent view showing why the site of the SE spur was chosen as a city with cliffs on all sides except for the north making it much easier to defend. The Tyropoean Valley between the SW hill and the SE spur (City of David) was originally much deeper but has been filled in quite considerably over the centuries. As we will learn later there originally was a hill on that SE spur that was later levelled. That hill was the original Mout Zion and the site of the citadel.

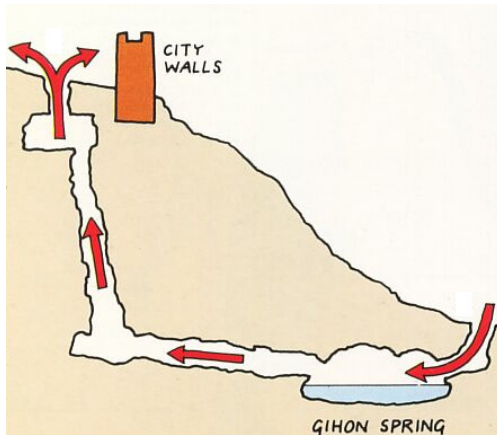
In **Judges 1:8** we read:

Now the children of Judah fought against Jerusalem and took it, they struck it with the edge of the sword, and set the city on fire.

The Jebusites at some time after not mentioned in the scriptures regained control of Jerusalem and they inhabited the fortress city until the time of King David who conquered

the city and brought the Ark of God into it about **1004 BC**. We read of David's conquest of Jerusalem in **2 Samuel 5**:

And the king and his men went to Jerusalem against the Jebusites, the inhabitants of the land...Now David said on that day, "Whoever climbs up by way of the water shaft and defeats the Jebusites...he shall be chief and captain"...Then David dwelt in the stronghold and called it the City of David. And David built all around from the Millo and inward (**2 Samuel 5:6, 7-9**).



The city was taken by way of climbing up the water shaft that went from the Gihon spring at the base of the hill straight up to the top within the walled city. This shaft may be the same shaft that is today called "Warren's Shaft". We are told in the parallel account that:

Joab, the son of Zeruiah, went up first and became chief (**1 Chronicles 11:6**)

Joab was the first and other soldiers followed in surprising the Jebusites and conquering them. David changed its name from Jebus to the City of David. From the Millo, close to the centre of the city, he began constructing new buildings.

The name Millo means "fill-in". To the immediate north of the Millo was a hump called the Ophel. To the south of the Millo was the original Mount Zion which was more elevated at the time than the Ophel and was where the citadel was located. David filled in the area between the citadel of Mount Zion and the Ophel to create more level land. We read about his bringing of the Ark into Jerusalem over in **2 Samuel 6**:

The ark of the Lord remained in the house of Obed-Edom the Gittite three months. And the Lord blessed Obed-Edom and all his household. Now it was told King David, saying, "The Lord has blessed the house of Obed-Edom and all that belongs to him because of the ark of God." So David went and brought up the ark of God from the house of Obed-Edom to the City of David with gladness...

The ark of the Lord came into the City of David...So they brought the ark of the Lord and set it in its place in the midst of the tabernacle that David had erected for it (**2 Samuel 5:6, 7-9, 6:11-12, 16-17**).

It was brought to the City of David. It came “**into** the City of David” (**2 Samuel 6:16**) where the people within the walled city got to watch it pass and celebrate its coming to David’s new capital city, Jerusalem. David then set it in its place in the midst of the tabernacle that he erected for it.

Where did David have the tabernacle built? Did he place the tabernacle inside the walls of the City of David where the procession of the Ark had been? Did he place the tabernacle at the site of the Dome of the Rock to the north of the City of David? Or did he feel compelled to place it somewhere else? Let’s notice where this tabernacle that housed the Ark of God was located in David’s day:

And King David said, “Call to me Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada.” So they came before the king. The king also said to them, “Take with you the servants of your lord, and have Solomon my son ride on my own mule, **and take him down to Gihon**. There let Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet anoint him king over Israel; and blow the horn, and say, ‘*Long live King Solomon!*’ Then you shall come up after him, and he shall come and sit on my throne, and he shall be king in my place. For I have appointed him to be ruler over Israel and Judah”...

So Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet, Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, the Cherethites, and the Pelethites went down and had Solomon ride on King David’s mule, and **took him to Gihon**. **Then Zadok the priest took a horn of oil from the tabernacle and anointed Solomon**. And they blew the horn, and all the people said, “*Long live King Solomon!*” (**1 Kings 1:32-39**).



When the Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet anointed Solomon king they went **DOWN** from the walled city to the Gihon spring. **THEN** Zadok took a horn of oil from the tabernacle and anointed Solomon king. It was **AFTER** Zadok had gone down to the Gihon spring that he took the horn from the tabernacle and anointed Solomon. The tabernacle was located **AT THE GIHON SPRING!**

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."**

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 (**Temples, p.295**).

David felt it necessary to pitch the tabernacle outside the walls of the city and place it above the Gihon spring.

After bringing the Ark into the City of David before so the people could rejoice at its presence in Jerusalem it's obvious that David would not have afterwards placed it outside the walls of the city **unless he knew it was absolutely necessary.**

David knew it was absolutely necessary that the tabernacle and the ark that symbolised God's throne was above a spring and so he placed it above the Gihon spring.

In **1 Chronicles 14:1** we read that Hiram, king of Tyre, out of a desire to build an alliance with Israel sent stone masons and carpenters and great Lebanon cedar trees and built David a great house in Jerusalem. After it was complete David looked at the magnificent house and compared it to the tent wherein the ark of God was and began to think about building God a great temple.

Now it came to pass, when David was dwelling in his house, that David said to Nathan the prophet, "See now, I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of the covenant of the LORD *is* under tent curtains." Then Nathan said to David, "Do all that *is* in your heart, for God *is* with you."

But it happened that night that the word of God came to Nathan, saying, "Go and tell My servant David, 'Thus says the LORD: "You shall not build Me a house to dwell in. For I have not dwelt in a house since the time that I brought up Israel, even to this day, but have gone from tent to tent, and from *one* tabernacle *to another*. Wherever I have moved about with all Israel, have I ever spoken a word to any of the judges of Israel, whom I commanded to shepherd My people, saying, 'Why have you not built Me a house of cedar?'..."

And it shall be, when your days are fulfilled, when you must go *to be* with your fathers, that I will set up your seed after you, who will be of your sons; and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build Me a house, and I will establish his throne forever (**1 Chronicles 17:1-6, 11-12**).

God did not have any intention to have a temple built for Him at any time in Israel's history. He was quite content for the worship of Him to be done at a tabernacle. However, God was moved by David's wholehearted attitude to honour Him and decided that one of his sons would be allowed to build Him a house.

Towards the end of David's life David greatly sinned when he called for a census of the men of Israel who could fight for him in battle. Over three terrifying days a great plague went from one end of Israel to the other killing 70 000 people.

Even though the Ark was at the Gihon spring in Jerusalem and David had built a tent or tabernacle for it, the official worship of God where the priesthood made the regular sacrifices was at the tabernacle near a spring at Gibeon several miles NW of Jerusalem.

David was in a hurry to stop the plague before most of the population was wiped out because of it. He didn't have the time to go up to Gibeon to inquire of the Lord so he urgently built an altar to make offerings to beseech God to stop the plague.

He bought Ornan's threshing floor from him, built an altar and made sacrifices and God answered his prayer and stopped the plague. David then decides that this is the place where

his son will build the Temple relocating the official place of worship from Gibeon to Jerusalem.

At that time, when David saw that the LORD had answered him on the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite, he sacrificed there. For the tabernacle of the LORD and the altar of the burnt offering, which Moses had made in the wilderness, *were* at that time at the high place in Gibeon. But David could not go before it to inquire of God, for he was afraid of the sword of the angel of the LORD.

Then David said, “This *is* the house of the LORD God, and this *is* the altar of burnt offering for Israel.” So David commanded to gather the aliens who *were* in the land of Israel; and he appointed masons to cut hewn stones to build the house of God. And David prepared iron in abundance for the nails of the doors of the gates and for the joints, and bronze in abundance beyond measure, and cedar trees in abundance; for the Sidonians and those from Tyre brought much cedar wood to David.

Now David said, “Solomon my son *is* young and inexperienced, and the house to be built for the LORD *must be* exceedingly magnificent, famous and glorious throughout all countries. I will now make preparation for it.” So David made abundant preparations before his death.

Then he called for his son Solomon, and charged him to build a house for the LORD God of Israel. And David said to Solomon: “My son, as for me, it was in my mind to build a house to the name of the LORD my God; “but the word of the LORD came to me, saying, ‘You have shed much blood and have made great wars; you shall not build a house for My name, because you have shed much blood on the earth in My sight...

“Now, my son, may the LORD be with you; and may you prosper, and build the house of the LORD your God, as He has said to you...

“Indeed I have taken much trouble to prepare for the house of the LORD one hundred thousand talents of gold and one million talents of silver, and bronze and iron beyond measure, for it is so abundant.

“I have prepared timber and stone also, and you may add to them. Moreover *there are* workmen with you in abundance: woodsmen and stonecutters, and all types of skillful men for every kind of work. Of gold and silver and bronze and iron *there is* no limit. Arise and begin working, and the LORD be with you” (1 Chronicles 21:27-22:16).

The gold and silver alone accumulated by David are at the lowest reckoned to have amounted to between two and three billion dollars.

David had been careful to place the ark above a spring to maintain the important symbolism we’ve already looked at. In choosing Ornan’s threshing floor as the location for the Temple he did not violate this symbolism.

In truth, Ornan’s threshing floor was located just up the hill from where the tabernacle was over the Gihon spring. It was located on the small Ophel summit directly up the hill from the Gihon spring. The course of the spring, while starting where the tabernacle was, continued under the Ophel summit.

We will see further quotes a little later showing that this was the case and that the Temple of Solomon was above the Gihon spring.

Solomon Builds the First Temple

Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary gives the following description of the details of Solomon's Temple and his other building projects:

Solomon's Temple is described, though incompletely, in **1 Kings 6–7** and in **2 Chronicles 3–4**. The description of Ezekiel's Temple (**Ezekiel 40–43**), an elaborate version of Solomon's, may supplement those accounts. Solomon's Temple was in the shape of a rectangle that ran east and west. Like Ezekiel's Temple (**Ezekiel 41:8**), it may have stood on a platform. The accounts in Kings and Chronicles suggest that there was an inner and an outer courtyard.

Three main objects were situated in the inner courtyard. The bronze altar that was used for burnt offerings (**1 Kings 8:22, 64; 9:25**) measured 20 cubits square and 10 cubits high (**2 Chronicles 4:1**).

Between that and the porch of the Temple stood the bronze laver, or molten sea, that held water for the ritual washings (**1 Kings 7:23–26**). It was completely round, 5 cubits high, 10 cubits in diameter, and 30 cubits around its circumference (**1 Kings 7:23**). Twelve bronze oxen, in four groups of three, faced outward toward the four points of the compass, with the bronze laver resting on their backs (**1 Kings 7:25**; Ahaz removed the bronze laver from the oxen; **2 Kings 16:17**).

Finally, at the dedication of the Temple, Solomon is said to have stood on a "bronze platform five cubits long, five cubits wide, and three cubits high" that stood in the middle of the courtyard (**2 Chronicles 6:12–13**).

The interior dimensions of the Temple were 60 cubits long [30 metres], 20 cubits wide [8 metres], and 30 cubits high [15 metres or 5 stories] (1 Kings 6:2).

The ten steps to the porch of the Temple were flanked by two bronze columns, Jachin and Boaz, each 25 cubits high (including the capitals) and 12 cubits in circumference (**1 Kings 7:15–16; 2 Chronicles 3:15**).

The porch was 10 cubits long, 20 cubits wide, and, supposedly, **120 cubits high (2 Chronicles 3:4)**...

To the west of the porch was the Holy Place, a room 40 cubits long, 20 cubits wide, and 30 cubits high where ordinary rituals took place. Windows near the ceiling provided light. In the Holy Place were the golden incense altar, the table for the showbread, five pair of lampstands, and the utensils used for sacrifice.

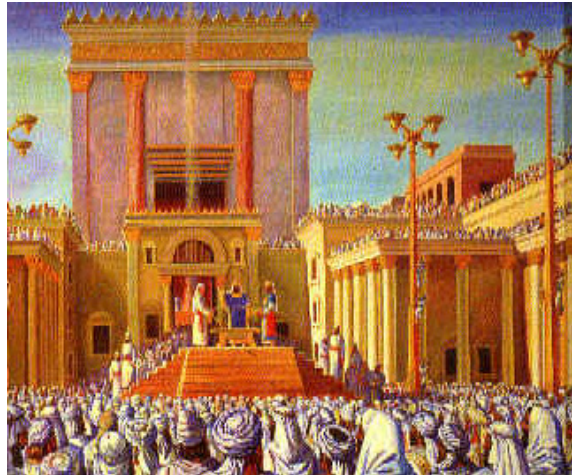
Double doors, probably opened once a year for the high priest on the Day of Atonement, led from the west end of the Holy Place to the Holy of Holies, a 20-cubit cube. In that room two wooden cherubim, each ten feet tall, stood with outstretched wings. Two of the wings met above the ark of the covenant and two of them touched the north and south walls of the room (**1 Kings 6:27**). God's presence was manifested in the Holy of Holies as a cloud (**1 Kings 8:10–11**) [This cloud was the Shekinah glory].

The outside of the Temple building, excluding the porch area, consisted of side chambers, or galleries, that rose three stories high (**1 Kings 6:5**). The rooms of the Temple were paneled with cedar, the floor was cypress, and the ornately carved doors and walls were overlaid with gold (**1 Kings 6:20–22**). Not a stone could be seen...After completing the temple, Solomon built the palace complex, a series of five structures.

These other buildings were the "house of the Forest of Lebanon," an assembly hall and a storage place for arms; an anteroom for the throne, where distinguished guests

were received; the throne room, an ornately carved enclosure that contained the throne, which was made of carved ivory inlaid with gold; the king's palace, which was very large so as to hold the king's family; and the residence for Solomon's Egyptian wives, which adjoined the king's palace.

Solomon also planted vineyards, orchards, and gardens that contained all types of trees and shrubs. These were watered by streams and pools that flowed through the complex. **(Article – Temple, section - Solomon's Temple).**



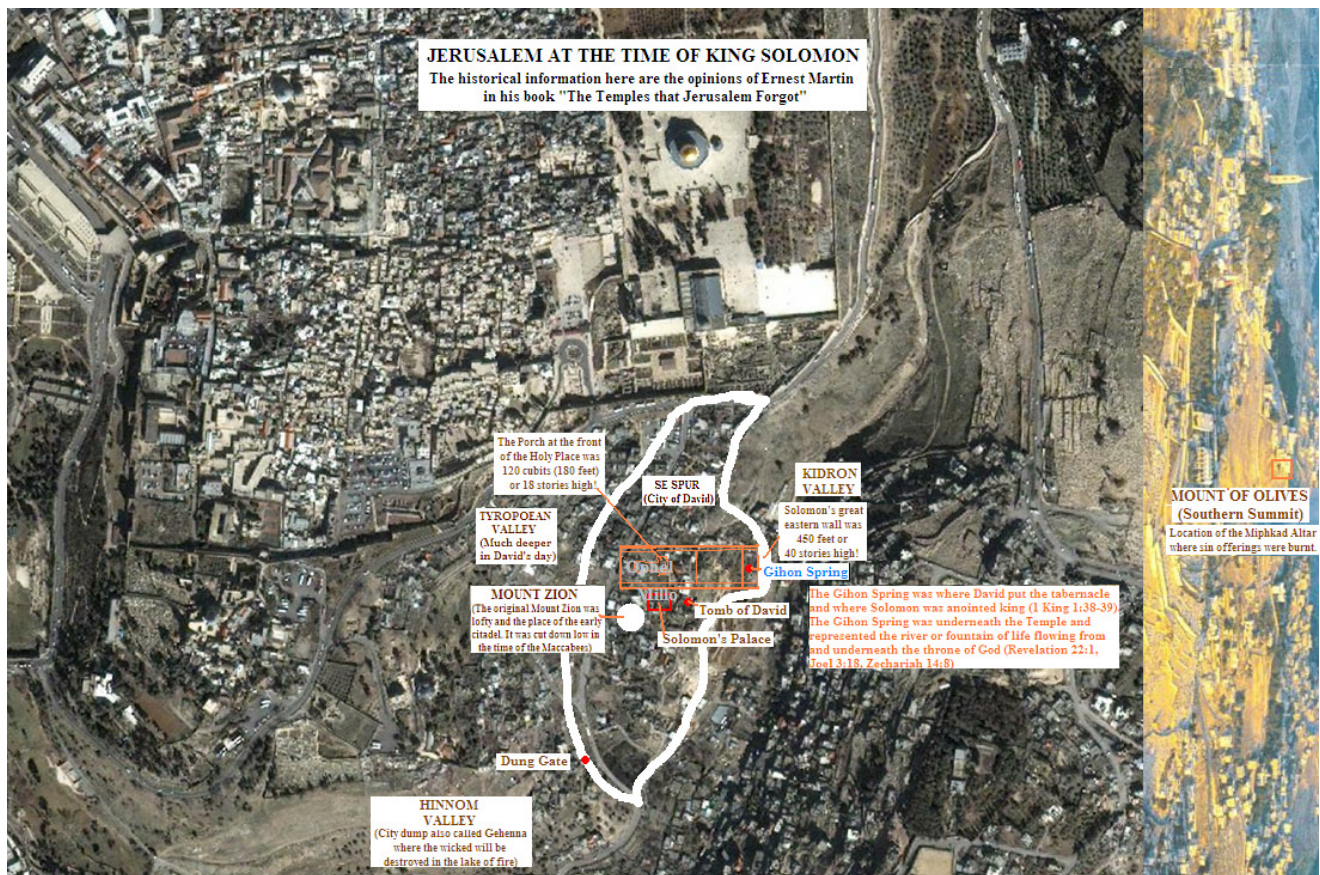
The porch (also called a vestibule in the millennial Temple described by Ezekiel) was an extension of the Holy Place at the front of it. In some respects it was similar to the dual towers at the front of a typical Gothic cathedral. It was attached to the Holy Place at its front but it was significantly higher than the rest of the Holy Place.

We are told in **2 Chronicles 3:4** that the porch of Solomon's Temple was 120 cubits high and the rest of the Holy Place was 30 cubits high.

At 120 cubits high (180 feet) this would make the porch as high as an 18 story building! One has to wonder just what technology was used to build it since there is a limit to how high one can build with stone which was not overcome until steel frames were developed 100 years ago which led to the development of skyscrapers. Was the upper part very thin? Was it supported by an iron frame?

As we will soon see Solomon also built a massive wall from the very bottom of the Kidron Valley to extend the Temple platform out towards the valley and bring the Gihon spring under the Temple platform. Josephus tells us that it was 300 cubits (450 feet) or the height of a 40 story skyscraper!

Add the height of the porch (18 stories high) to the height of the great eastern wall (40 stories high) and the top of the porch was nearly 60 stories high above the floor of the Kidron Valley!!! Solomon's Temple was truly one of the ancient wonders of the world which the world has sadly not recognized it for all it really was!



Ernest Martin makes these comments about Solomon's other building projects that relate to location 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." 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 man-made or natural abutments to any other urban area. Jerusalem was then located solely on the southeast crescent-shaped ridge...

There was an area between the Akra [the Citadel just south of the centre] 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") [1 Kings 9:15, 24], which was a northern extension of a former "Millo" built on the north side of Zion in the Jebusite period [2 Samuel 5:9] - before the time of David.

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 Kidron 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 cubits above the floor of the Kidron Valley (about 600 feet - this answers to a 40/45 story skyscraper in height).

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...

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 (just south of the Temple) in the "Millo" area between the Akra and the Temple. Indeed, Solomon's palace abutted directly to the south side of the Temple.

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 (**Temples, p.335, 332-334**).

Solomon later, at the time that he built the Temple, constructed a massive wall from the very floor of the Kidron Valley to extend the city outwards so the Temple could be within the walls of the city and yet still be directly above the Gihon spring.

When reading Josephus' accounts of the Temple it is obvious that he believed the Temple of his time was located at the same spot where Solomon built the first temple. Notice what Josephus says about the location of the Temple:

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 (**Wars of the Jews, V.5,1 – Temples p.435**).

The area on top of this strong hill was not large. Josephus said that "its summit barely [just barely] sufficed for shrine and the altar" when the first Temple was originally built there. This can hardly be said about the large flat platform of the Haram which covers some 36 acres. Notice further what Josephus says:

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]...

Then, after having enclosed the hill from its base [from the floor of the Kidron 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 latter, where its foundations were lowest, they built up from 300 cubits [450 feet or between 40 and 45 stories high]; at some spots this figure was exceeded.

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 ravines [the Kidron and the Tyropoeon Valleys] wishing to level the narrow alleys of the town" (**Wars of the Jews, V.5,1 – Temples p.436-438**).

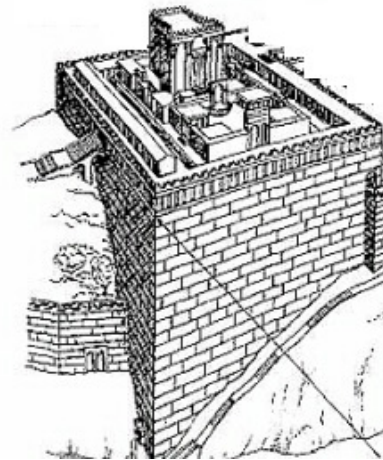
The Great Eastern Wall of Solomon's Temple

Solomon built a great wall on the eastern side from the very base of the Kidron Valley. It rose 300 cubits which is the equivalent of 40 to 45 story modern skyscraper. This can hardly be said about the eastern wall of the Haram which at its highest point in the SE corner is only several stories high.

Solomon built this great eastern wall straight up from the very base of the Kidron Valley which brought the Gihon spring within the city walls and then he had the area between the top of the SE spur known as the City of David and this eastern wall filled in.

A huge amount of fill was dumped and compacted on the eastern slope between the top of the hill and the eastern wall that shot straight up from the base of the valley.

All this fill went directly over the Gihon spring and then Solomon built the Temple in an east-west direction from the top of the Ophel summit where Ornan's threshing floor was and over this artificial extension that was directly above the Gihon spring.



Speaking in amazement of Solomon's original work that was added to by others Josephus writes:

He [Solomon] also built a wall below, **beginning at the bottom [of the Kidron 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 in Herod's day], 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 (**Antiquities of the Jews XV, 11, 3 – Temples p.451**).

About this description by Josephus Ernest Martin writes:

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. 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 (**Temples, p.466**).

Notice carefully what Josephus said about the position of this eastern wall. He said that it was begun at the very bottom of the valley.

The eastern wall was built at the very bottom of the valley NOT half-way up! The eastern wall of the Haram does not start from the very bottom of the valley. It starts half-way up and is not anywhere near 300 cubits (450 feet) high!

This eastern wall gave the appearance of great height and impressiveness to the completed structure. Josephus, in the account of the Roman general Pompey's attack against the Temple in 63 B.C. before Herod's extensions to the Temple complex, says the following:

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 (**Wars of the Jews, I,7,1 – Temples p.439**).

Speaking of the incredible height of the eastern wall of the city which was also the eastern wall of the Temple Josephus also writes:

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...This wall was itself the most prodigious work that was ever heard of by man** (**Antiquities of the Jews, VIII, 3,9; XV, 11, 3 – Temples, p.441**)...

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 Kidron, **the depth at that point being consequently terrific (War of the Jews, VI, 3, 2 – Temples, p.442).**

Notice Josephus says Solomon artificially **“elevated the ground 400 cubits (600 feet).”** Then he made it level at the top of this artificial extension **“on which the Temple was built.”**

Josephus' figure of 600 feet, if true, would put this work, “the most prodigious work that was ever heard of by man”, 120 feet higher than the Great Pyramid of Egypt. The highest point was at the SE corner and was called the pinnacle of the Temple which was built at the top of this extended mountain.

The pinnacle of the Temple, which had a sheer drop between 300 and 600 feet, was the place that Satan took Jesus to and tempted him to jump off and see if angels would catch his fall as promised in the Bible.

Notice further what Josephus said about its great height:

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 (Antiquities of the Jews XV, 11, 5 – Temples p.443).**

This incredible height from which someone would be giddy looking down from could certainly not be true of the SE corner of the Haram. Ernest Martin has these things to say about Josephus' descriptions of the Temple:

While Josephus said in **Wars of the Jews V.5,1** that the top of the eastern wall of Herod's Temple was 300 cubits' above the Kidron Valley (or higher in places), he said in **Antiquities of the Jews 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” (**Wars of the Jews V.5,1**). And in **Antiquities of the Jews VIII.3, 9** Josephus said Solomon “filled up great valleys with earth.” This means Solomon actually filled in with earth the original Kidron 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...

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 [the eastern side of it from north to south].** 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 [north to south] 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]. 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...

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...

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...

Tacitus, the Roman, [wrote]:

"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**" (Tacitus, History, V, 11-12)

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...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. (**Temples p. 443-445, 450, 452**).

This eastern wall brought the Gihon spring within the city walls of Jerusalem. Eusebius who quotes an earlier writer around of the third century BC, also shows that the only water at Jerusalem came from a single spring **within** 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; and that the city has a circuit of twenty seven furlongs, and that there is also **within** the place a spring which spouts up abundance of water (**Eusebius, Preparation of the Gospel, book 9, chapter 36 – Temples p.290**).

Within the walls of Jerusalem in the time after the Jewish exiles returned from Babylon was the Gihon spring. Up until Solomon's Temple was built it was outside. Solomon was the one who brought it within the city by building a massive wall from the floor of the Kidron Valley to include the spring within the city.

Solomon felt it necessary to follow David and position the original Temple directly over the Gihon Spring which was just below the Ophel summit.

When I was in Jerusalem in 2008 I visited the City of David site and photographed these walls and stairs on the eastern slope just north of Ernest Martin's Temple site. These walls mid way up the Kidron Valley to the top of the City of David are dated by archaeologists to the 9th Century BC so if there was this great eastern wall it appears that it did not extend north of the Temple site.

Ernest Martin makes these comments about what Solomon did to transport the water up from the spring to the Temple:



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 man-made.

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." This tradition began because Solomon was anointed as king at the Gihon Spring. 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. 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...

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 Kidron Valley, sometimes in an open trench and at other times within an enclosed pipe. Much of that 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 Kidron 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" (**Wars of the Jews, V, 5,1**).

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 (**Temples, p.299-300, 450**).

The great Jewish master, Maimonides (born in **1134 AD**), makes this fascinating comment about the caves underneath the City of David where the Temple was:

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 [caves], a place in which to hide the Ark (Maimonides, 1957:17 quoted in Peters, Jerusalem, p.227 – Temples p.140).

Could this be where the Ark of the Covenant with the original Ten Commandments be located? Might archaeologists some day in the near future discover the Ark of the Covenant in one of the tunnels underneath the City of David on the SE spur? Only time will tell.

Jerusalem and the Temple after Solomon

The kingdom of Israel split into two kingdoms straight after Solomon's death. Shishak, king of Egypt, took advantage of the situation and conquered the southern kingdom of Judah where Jerusalem was four years later in **927 BC**. He took away the Temple treasures during the reign of Rehoboam, Solomon's son.

It happened in the fifth year of King Rehoboam *that* Shishak king of Egypt came up against Jerusalem. And he took away the treasures of the house of the LORD and the treasures of the king's house; he took away everything. He also took away all the gold shields which Solomon had made" (**1 Kings 14:25-26**).

The Egyptian name for the pharaoh known in the Bible as Shishak was Thutmose III. Thutmose III was one of the early kings of the 18th dynasty, the wealthiest and most powerful dynasty in the history of ancient Egypt which ended two centuries later with the famous king Tutankhamen.

This link between the Bible and Egyptian history can be well established by a comparison between the objects in the Temple mentioned in the Bible and the record of the vast amount of booty that Thutmose III brought back from Palestine. This booty is recorded on a wall outside of the Holy of holies in the Temple of Karnak in Egypt which I've had the opportunity to visit and photograph.

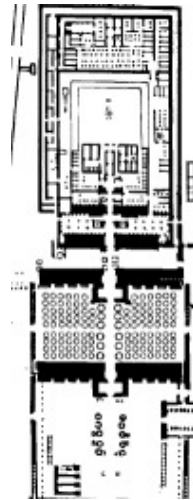


The temple of Karnak in many respects copies some of the features God established earlier with the tabernacle and the Temple of Solomon's day. It has outer courts and a Holy of holies just like Solomon's Temple. Even some of the offerings and pattern of the priesthood bears a number of similarities.

Rehoboam's grandson Asa used the Temple treasure to buy an alliance with Syria (**1 Kings 15:18**) while Ahaz used the Temple treasures of gold and silver buy off Assyrian king Tiglath-Pileser (**2 Kings 16:8**).

Jerusalem was taken by the Philistines and Arabians in the reign of Jehoram (**886 BC**) and by the Israelites in the reign of Amaziah (**826 BC**).

Manasseh placed Canaanite altars and a carved image of Asherah, a Canaanite goddess, in the Temple (**2 Kings 21:4, 7**). Ahaz introduced an altar patterned after one he saw in Damascus (**2 Kings 16:10–16**). By about **630 BC**, Josiah had to repair the Temple (**2 Kings 22:3–7**).



Jerusalem was taken three times by Nebuchadnezzar, in the years **607, 597 and 585 BC**, in the last of which it was utterly destroyed.

After robbing the Temple of its treasures and gold during his first attack (**2 Kings 24:13**), in **585 BC**, the Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar looted, sacked and burned the Temple (**2 Kings 25:9, 13–17**), but people still came to the site to offer sacrifice (**Jeremiah 41:5**).

Now it came to pass in the ninth year of his reign, in the tenth month, on the tenth *day* of the month, *that* Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon and all his army came against Jerusalem and encamped against it; and they built a siege wall against it all around...

And in the fifth month, on the seventh *day* of the month (which was the nineteenth year of King Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon), Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard, a servant of the king of Babylon, came to Jerusalem. He burned the house of the LORD and the king's house; all the houses of Jerusalem, that is, all the houses of the great, he burned with fire. And all the army of the Chaldeans who *were with* the captain of the guard broke down the walls of Jerusalem all around.

Then Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard carried away captive the rest of the people *who* remained in the city and the defectors who had deserted to the king of Babylon, with the rest of the multitude...

The bronze pillars that *were* in the house of the LORD, and the carts and the bronze Sea that *were* in the house of the LORD, the Chaldeans broke in pieces, and carried their bronze to Babylon. They also took away the pots, the shovels, the trimmers, the spoons, and all the bronze utensils with which the priests ministered. The firepans and the basins, the things of solid gold and solid silver, the captain of the guard took away.

The two pillars, one Sea, and the carts, which Solomon had made for the house of the LORD, the bronze of all these articles was beyond measure. The height of one pillar was eighteen cubits, and the capital on it was of bronze (**2 Kings 15:1-16**).

The Rebuilding of the Temple by the Babylonian Exiles

Babylon was eventually conquered by the Persians in **539 BC** around 50 years after the Temple was destroyed. Through the prophet Isaiah 200 years before it happened God named Cyrus by name as the one who would conquer Babylon and gave the ingenious method by which he would use to conquer Babylon (**Isaiah 45:1-3**).

Josephus wrote that Cyrus was so impressed with the prophecy when the Jewish leaders showed it to him that he allowed the Jews who were captive in Babylon to go back and rebuild Jerusalem (**Ezra 1:1-3**) fulfilling another part of Isaiah's prophecy:

"Who says of Cyrus, '*He is My shepherd, and he shall perform all My pleasure, saying to Jerusalem, 'You shall be built,' and to the temple, 'Your foundation shall be laid'*'" (**Isaiah 44:28**).

The restoration of the Temple commenced under Cyrus (**538 BC**) and was completed under Artaxerxes 1, who issued commissions for this purpose to Ezra (**457 BC**) and Nehemiah (**445 BC**).

We saw previously with the quote from Eusebius that in the **third century BC** the Gihon spring was within the walls of Jerusalem. Another eyewitness account showing the Temple was located above or very near to the Gihon spring was Aristeeas. Aristeeas, a Jew from Egypt who visited Jerusalem about fifty years after the time of Alexander the Great gave a detailed description of the Temple and Jerusalem in which he states the following:

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 (**Temples, p.284**).

The spring was within the city. Notice what he also says about the shape and location of Jerusalem at the time:

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.

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 [a semi-circle or crescent shaped]**...Indeed, the place bends back, since the city is built on a **mountain** [on a single mountain] (**Temples, p.269, 267**).



Aristeas tells us that Jerusalem in the third century BC was "crescent-shaped" and he says the entire city of Jerusalem in his time was located on ONE mountain ridge. It was not until the time of Simon the Hasmonean over a century later when any serious permanent settlement was begun on the SW hill.

Another eyewitness of the same time as Aristeas was Hecateus who wrote the following about Jerusalem and the location of the Temple in relation to the rest of the city:

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 [west to east] and 150 feet broad [north to south], 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 (**Temples, p.272**).

There is no way is Hecateus could be describing the Temple as being where the Dome of the Rock is. It is in the absolute north of the city if the Haram and SE spur constituted the city at the time and at the very north-east of the city if Jerusalem included the lower and upper city of Jerusalem as it was in Jesus' time.

The Haram is **FAR AWAY** from its centre though the actual Temple above the Gihon spring was positioned near the very center of Jerusalem, if Jerusalem was just the SE spur that was the original City of David and shaped like a crescent or semi-circle like a Greek theatre.

One of the Psalmists says this about the location of the Temple in Jerusalem in **Psalm 116:18- 19**:

"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"

The Temple of God was in the middle of Jerusalem. We have a number of clues as to the geography of Jerusalem's walls and gates at the time of the return of the Babylonian exiles in the book of Nehemiah.

There are quite a number gates specifically mentioned in the book of Nehemiah. They include the Valley Gate, the Refuse Gate, the Fountain Gate, the Water Gate, the Gate of Ephraim, the Old Gate, the Fish Gate, the Sheep Gate, the Prison Gate, the Horse Gate, the East Gate and the Miphkad Gate. There are 12 mentioned by name. Some of the gates possibly were known by more than one name bringing the number of gates down in number.

Where were these gates located? Of the gates the one that we can be most confident of locating is the Refuse Gate, also known as the Dung Gate. This is almost universally agreed to have been located close to the Pool of Siloam at the southern end of the SE spur that was the original City of David. It is the gate that is closest to the Valley of Hinnom which is widely known to have been the refuse dump of Jerusalem. In **Nehemiah 3:13** we read:

“Hanun and the inhabitants of Zanoah repaired the **Valley Gate**. They built it, hung its doors with its bolts and bars, and *repaired a thousand cubits of the wall as far as the Refuse Gate*.”

The Valley Gate we're told here is 1000 cubits or 1500 feet from the Refuse Gate. If north of the Refuse Gate this would place it a little over half way up the Tryophean Valley along the SE spur. If west of the Refuse Gate this would place it half way up the SW hill from the Tryophean Valley. Logically it gets its name from the Tryophean Valley itself.

We have already seen that the city of Jerusalem was crescent shaped along the SE spur so logically this Valley Gate was on the western wall directly west of the Temple.

At the dedication of the wall two groups set off from the Valley Gate one in one direction and the other group in the opposite direction and then met up in the east where they proceeded to enter the Temple. Nehemiah tells us the following about the journey of the two companies each walking an opposite half of the wall:

So I brought the leaders of Judah up on the wall, and appointed two large thanksgiving choirs. *One* went to the right hand on the wall toward the Refuse Gate...By the Fountain Gate, in front of them, they went up the stairs of the City of David, on the stairway of the wall, beyond the house of David, as far as the Water Gate eastward.

The other thanksgiving choir went the opposite way, and I was behind them with half of the people on the wall, going past the Tower of the Ovens as far as the Broad Wall, and above the Gate of Ephraim, above the Old Gate, above the Fish Gate, the Tower of Hananel, the Tower of the Hundred, as far as the Sheep Gate; and they stopped by the Gate of the Prison. So the two thanksgiving choirs stood in the house of God (**Nehemiah 12:31-40**).

So, the first company went toward the Refuse Gate and therefore started in the west, went south and then back to the east of the city to enter the east side of the Temple. The second company went from the west towards the north and then back towards the east.

The Fountain Gate was located at the end of the journey of the first company at the eastern entrance of the Temple and presumably gets its name from the Gihon spring. The Water Gate was situated in that eastern part of the city as well.

On the route going from the west to the north and then back to the east the second company in order passed the Gate of Ephraim, the Old Gate, the Fish Gate, the Sheep Gate and then came to the Prison Gate. Ernest Martin tells us the following about the Prison Gate:

Solomon's palace abutted directly to the south side of the Temple. 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." 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. Just north of the Water Gate was "the Wall of Ophel." 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 (**Temples, p.334**).

In **Nehemiah 3:15-16** we read:

Shallun the son of Col-Hozeh, leader of the district of Mizpah, repaired the Fountain Gate; he built it, covered it, hung its doors with its bolts and bars, and repaired the wall of the Pool of Shelah by the King's Garden, as far as the stairs that go down from the City of David. After him Nehemiah the son of Azbuk, leader of half the district of Beth Zur, made repairs as far as *the place* in front of the tombs of David, to the man-made pool, and as far as the House of the Mighty.

About this passage Ernest Martin writes:

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 Kidron Valley from the City of David.

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 (**Temples, p.336**).

The other three gates still to locate are the Horse Gate, the East Gate and the Miphkad Gate. There are not enough clues to locate the general location of the Horse Gate. The East Gate by its very name is somewhere on the eastern side of the city. The Miphkad Gate is the gate on the east side of the city that led to the Miphkad altar situated on the southern slope of the Mount of Olives which we will learn much more about when we discover where Jesus Christ was really crucified.

There are also four towers mentioned – the Tower of the Hundred, the Tower of Hananel (**Nehemiah 3:1**), the Tower of the Ovens (**Nehemiah 3:11**) and a great unnamed tower that projects from the king's upper house that appears to be close to the Ophel and the Water Gate in the east (**Nehemiah 3:25-27**). All these appear to have been in the northern half of the city which was most prone to being attacked though there may have been other towers in the south which are not mentioned.

The second company that circumnavigated the walls at its dedication started in the west of the city and then went north and first encountered the Tower of the Ovens (possibly this was an area where a lot of bread baking was done). Next they came to the Tower of Hananel and then the Tower of the Hundred. The fourth tower called the great projecting tower in the east may well be located on the great eastern wall that Solomon built. The vast majority of this wall from the bottom of the Kidron Valley probably survived the destruction by the Babylonians.

The city of Jerusalem was a part of the Persian Empire until Alexander the Great conquered the Persian Empire and Jerusalem surrendered to Alexander's army in **332 BC**. After Alexander's death the Greek Empire was split into four parts ruled by Alexander's four generals.

Control of Jerusalem went back and forth between the descendants of two of the divisions of the Greek Empire – the Seleucid kingdom ruled from Syria and the Ptolemaic kingdom ruled from Egypt.

The Abomination of Desolation

Antiochus Epiphanes was a Greek tyrant who ruled Syria in the **2nd century B.C.** He was a vicious enemy of the Jewish people, outlawing Judaism and desecrating the sacred Hebrew temple. In the Wikipedia online encyclopedia in its article on Antiochus Epiphanes (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Antiochus_Epiphanes) we read the following background that led up to the cruel conquest of Jerusalem by Antiochus Epiphanes and the event known as the abomination of desolation:

Notable events during his reign include the near-conquest of Egypt, which was halted by the threat of Rome intervention, and the beginning of the Jewish revolt of the Maccabees. He was succeeded by his infant son, Antiochus V Eupator.

Because the guardians of Ptolemy VI of Egypt were demanding the return of Coele-Syria, Antiochus, in **170 BC** decided on a preemptive strike and invaded Egypt, conquering all but Alexandria. He then captured Ptolemy agreed to let him continue as King but as his puppet. (This had the advantage of not alarming Rome.) Alexandria thereupon chose Ptolemy's brother Ptolemy Euergetes as King.

In Antiochus's absence, the two brothers came to an agreement to rule jointly. Hence in **168 BC** Antiochus again invaded and overran all Egypt but Alexandria while his fleet captured Cyprus. Near Alexandria he was met by a Roman envoy who told him that he must at once withdraw from Egypt and Cyprus. Antiochus said he would discuss it with his council, whereupon the envoy drew a line in the sand round him. Were he to step out of the circle, the envoy said, without having first undertaken to withdraw, he would be at war with Rome. Antiochus agreed to withdraw.

In a spirit of revenge he organized an expedition against Jerusalem, which he destroyed, as well as putting vast multitudes of its inhabitants to death in a most cruel manner. From this time the Jews began the war of independence under their Maccabean leaders with marked success, defeating the armies of Antiochus that

were sent against them. Enraged at this, Antiochus is said to have marched against them in person, threatening utterly to exterminate the nation; but on the way he was suddenly arrested by the hand of death (**164 BC**). The exact causes of the Jewish revolt, and of Antiochus' response to it, are uncertain; The Jewish accounts are in The Books of the Maccabees, and the successful revolt commemorated in the Holiday of Hanuka.

He was violently bitter against the Jews, and he made a furious and determined effort to exterminate them and their religion. In **December 168 BC**, he defiled the Temple, offered a pig on its altar, erected an altar to Jupiter, prohibited Temple worship. This desecration of the temple by offering a pig flesh to a pagan god, Jupiter Olympus in the Temple of God is a forerunner of a comparable event that Jesus Christ said would occur in the last days (**Matthew 24:15**).

Antiochus Epiphanes also forbade circumcision on pain of death, killed 80 000 men, women and children (**2 Maccabees 5:11-14**) sold thousands of Jewish families into slavery, destroyed all copies of Scripture that could be found and tortured Jews to force them to renounce their religion.

These atrocities led to the successful Maccabean revolt, where the Jews for a period of a century gained independent rule until they were conquered by the Romans in **63 BC** by Pompey.

Where was the Akra?

A new geographical term arises at the time of the Maccabean revolt against Antiochus Epiphanes that gives us yet another clue to the true location of the Temples at this time. It is called the Akra. The word Akra means "high area" - the top of a mountain. We are told in **1 Maccabees 13:52** that:

"The Temple mount [was located] alongside [Greek: para] the Akra."

If we can locate where the Akra was we will be able to locate where the Temple stood at this time. In **1 Maccabees 1:31-33** we read:

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].

It was in the City of David where the Akra or Citadel (fortress) was located. George Adam Smith, had this to say about the identification of the Akra with the City of David on the SE spur:

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 (**Jerusalem, Vol 1, p.445 – Temples p. 327**).

Josephus plainly identifies the Akra as synonymous or located on the SE spur that was the original City of David:

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 (Wars of the Jews, V.4,1 – Temples p.327).

Josephus tells us that the Akra before the time of Simon the Hasmonean was an elevated area higher than the Temple itself:

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 (**Antiquities of the Jews, XII.,5,4 – Temples p.332**).

Ernest Martin makes these comments about the location of the Akra:

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...

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.

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." Also: "The men in the Akra were hemming in Israel around the Temple, continually trying to harm them." 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..."

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...

Furthermore, in Antiquities Josephus referred to "the Akra in the Lower City [the southeast ridge]." 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 (**Temples, p.332, 323, 326-328**).

Simon the Hasmonean cuts down the Original Mount Zion

Psalms **48:1-4** tells us the following about the height of the original Mount Zion as described 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 on the SE ridge was initially quite a high mountain. Josephus says the following about a major change in the geography of Jerusalem that occurred in the days of Simon the Hasmonean during the period of the Maccabean rule in the second century BC:

The Hasmoneans in the period of their reign, both filled up the flatlike ravine, with the object of uniting the city with the Temple [located on the Ophel], and also **reduced the elevation of Akra by leveling its summit**, 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] (**Wars of the Jews, V.4,1 - Temples, p.329**).

Simon the Hasmonean completely cut down to the original Mount Zion that was a high mountain just to the south of where the Temple was on the Ophel. He made a high mountain (Akra) district into the lowest part of Jerusalem which ironically then became known as the "Lower City." Continuing on with Josephus he tells us:

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 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] (**Antiquities of the Jews, XIII. 6,7 - Temples, p.329**).

Ernest Martin makes the following comments about Simon's work of levelling the original Mount Zion:

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 Kidron 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 Kidron Valley to the Temple and the east gate. While travelling northward up the Kidron Valley, the 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...

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 Kidron 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 Migdol Edar, Jebus and the first City of David (up to Simon's own time) (**Temples, p.327-328, 355**).

Some part of the initial mountain may have been natural though the majority of the tel on which the citadel was built was man-made.

Simon the Hasmonean builds a New Zion

Ernest Martin has this to say about the history of settlement in what became referred to as the Upper City in the time of Jesus which was located on the SW hill:

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 (**Temples, p.335**).

As we saw before the Temple was located in the centre of the city in the time of Nehemiah. Had the Upper City been a part of Jerusalem at the time of Nehemiah then it would have been in the east of the city and not in its centre.

When did the Jews begin referring to the SW hill or Upper City as Mount Zion? In Josephus' **Wars of the Jews** his chapter heading for book 26, chapter 8 reads:

How Caesar raised banks round about the **Upper City [Mount Zion]** and when they were completed, gave orders that the machines should be brought. He then possessed himself of the whole city.

There is a question mark over whether the bracketed words Mount Zion were an insertion by later editors. In an article on his website entitled "Introduction to Temple Update" Ernest Martin suggests that the bracketed words Mount Zion were a spurious addition by later editors in the fourth century to bolster the view that the original Zion was on the SW hill close to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. In contrast to that point of view he writes in his book "The Temples that Jerusalem Forgot":

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 (**Temples, p.345**).

Ernest Martin tells us the following about the use of the word "Zion" as well as the term "Mount Moriah" in the scriptures:

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 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".

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" [**Micah 4:10**]. Even this did not limit its meaning because "Zion" would be transported farther afield. Micah said: "Thou [Zion] shalt go even to Babylon" [**Micah 4:10**]. The designation of

"Zion" would stay in Babylon long enough to bear children. 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" [Zechariah 2:7].**

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" **[Hebrews 12:22] (Temples, p.346-347).**

The use of the term Zion in some respects is similar to the term capital which is used for the centre of government. Originally the term meant where the original capital was located in Rome but came to be used in later times for places far from Rome where there was a seat of government.

It was felt that all the mountains of Jerusalem could legitimately be referred to as a mountain of Zion or Mount Zion. When the main buildings of government were moved by Simon the Hasmonean from the original SE hill to the new SW hill the SW hill came to be recognized as a new capital or Zion and thus, in the process of time, came to be referred to as Mount Zion.



There was, however, opposition to this change of location of "Mount Zion" from the SE to the SW hill. In fact, this opposition was what led to the establishment of the Qumran community by the Essenes who wrote the Dead Sea Scrolls.

The Dead Sea Scrolls speak of a leader labelled "the Wicked Priest" who most mainstream scholars such as Hershel Shanks, publisher of Biblical Archaeological Review, identify as Simon the Hasmonean. His opponent was the "Teacher of Righteousness" a leader of the Essene community.

The "Teacher of Righteousness" had this to say about what was happening in Jerusalem at the time:

This was the time of which it is written, Like a stubborn heifer thus was Israel stubborn (**Hosea 4:16**), when the Scoffer arose who shed over Israel the waters of lies. He caused them to wander in the pathless wilderness, **laying low the everlasting heights**, 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 (**Translation of Vermes, The Dead Sea Scrolls, p.83 – Temples p.369**).

He laid low the everlasting heights appears to be a clear reference to what Simon had done according to Josephus of cutting down Mount Zion to bedrock over a three year period. He also removed the landmark by moving Jerusalem from the SE to the SW hill.

In the next section we will look at how Simon the Hasmonean had the Temple rebuilt in the same place after its terrible defilement caused by Antiochus Epiphanes during the "abomination of desolation".

Ernest Martin in the following quotes explains the controversy over the moving of most of the city from the SE to the SW hill:

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 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"...

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."

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...

What Simon the Hasmonean did in Jerusalem in the wake of those seismic disturbances [earthquakes that affected much of Jerusalem on the SE ridge] 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" [Presumably this is a reference to the millennial city and Temple dimensions referred to in **Ezekiel 45**] 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. 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"...

Clearly, the original Tomb of David was located in the vicinity of the City of David on the southeast hill called the original Zion [1 Kings 2:10, Nehemiah 3:16]...

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. Indeed, the first Mount Zion ceased to be a mountain...

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 Hasmonean 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 (**Temples, p.382-384, 376, 343-346**).

Simon the Hasmonean builds a New Temple

The Temple was defiled very badly by Antiochus Epiphanes. As a result of this defilement Simon the Hasmonean with the approval of the majority of the Jews at the time had the existing Temple torn down and a replacement built in its place. Ernest Martin tells us how this occurred:

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.

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.

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. 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.

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. 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 "abomination of desolation." 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)." 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."

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.

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. 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. 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."

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 properly in 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 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...

So thoroughly polluted by Antiochus Epiphanes that everything about the Temple services had to be replaced, not just the Altar itself. 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.

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. 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. This means that two further commands to celebrate Hanukkah were given besides the original command by Judas Maccabeus.

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 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.

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. 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...



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 of a New Era for Israel. This fits the time of Simon the Hasmonean that the 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.

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.

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. "

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 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. (**Temples, p.356-361, 398-401**).

Herod the Great expands the Temple

In **37 BC** Herod the Great, a half-Jew half-Edomite, was installed by the Romans as ruler over Judea. Herod the Great was renowned for his building accomplishments and had a penchant for building what seemed impossible.

He built the great port of Ceasarea and rebuilt the Temple of God and constructed many buildings in Jerusalem to a great splendour that made Jerusalem into one of the greatest cities in the Roman Empire. His building projects were for His own glory. Another reason why this brutal tyrant wanted to greatly expand this religious complex was not because he was religious but to attract and accommodate more pilgrims to Jerusalem and benefit financially from what this would bring to Jerusalem.

Ernest Martin writes the following about expanded Temple in the time of Herod the Great and Jesus Christ:

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 Hyreanus in **124 B.C.E.** (when the final Hanukkah was ordered).

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:

"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]" **[Isaiah 54:1-2]**.

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...

Recall that Josephus said that Herod doubled the size of the Temple (**Wars of the Jews 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 of the Jews V. 5, 1**).

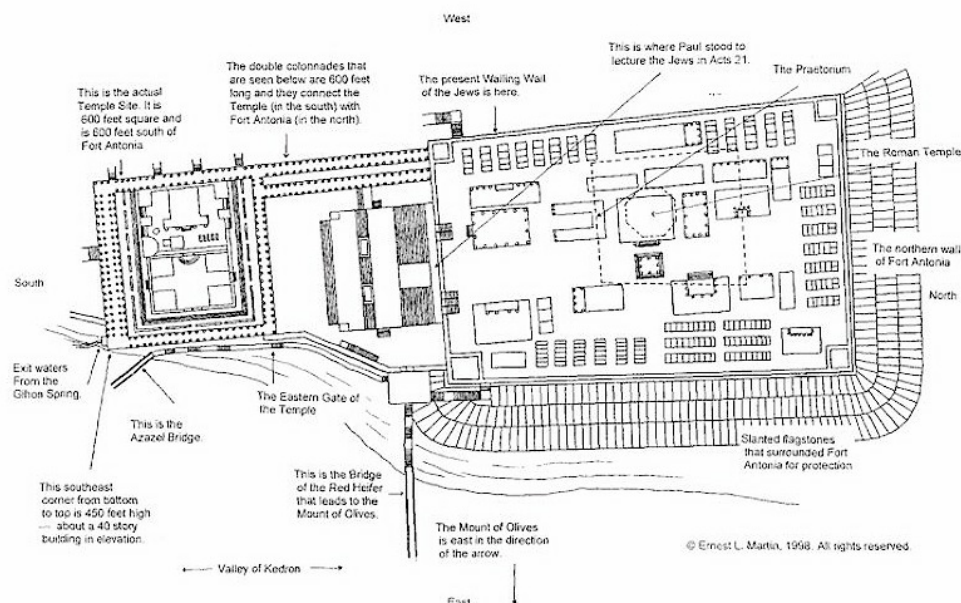
As the Temple platform became larger, it was necessary to reposition the Holy of Holies and the Altar of Burnt Offering to make these areas to be centralized within the new dimensions of the Temple...

In the Temple of Nehemiah and Hecateus it [the Holy of Holies] was ... 75 feet north of the southern wall. In Simon's Temple, the Holy of Holies was moved [to] 150 feet north of the southern wall [so it remained in the centre going north-south]. And in Herod's Temple it was moved [to] 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... This new Holy of Holies is what the Jewish authorities in the time of Jesus said had been built [in 46 years]... (**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...

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 Kidron 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...

A Birdseye View (looking downward) on the Temple and Fort Antonia
[The dotted line in Fort Antonia represents the platform of the Dome of the Rock, and the Dome itself is shown with its octagonal shape.]



[Josephus wrote] "This hill [Temple platform] 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" [Antiquities of the Jews XV.,11,3] ...

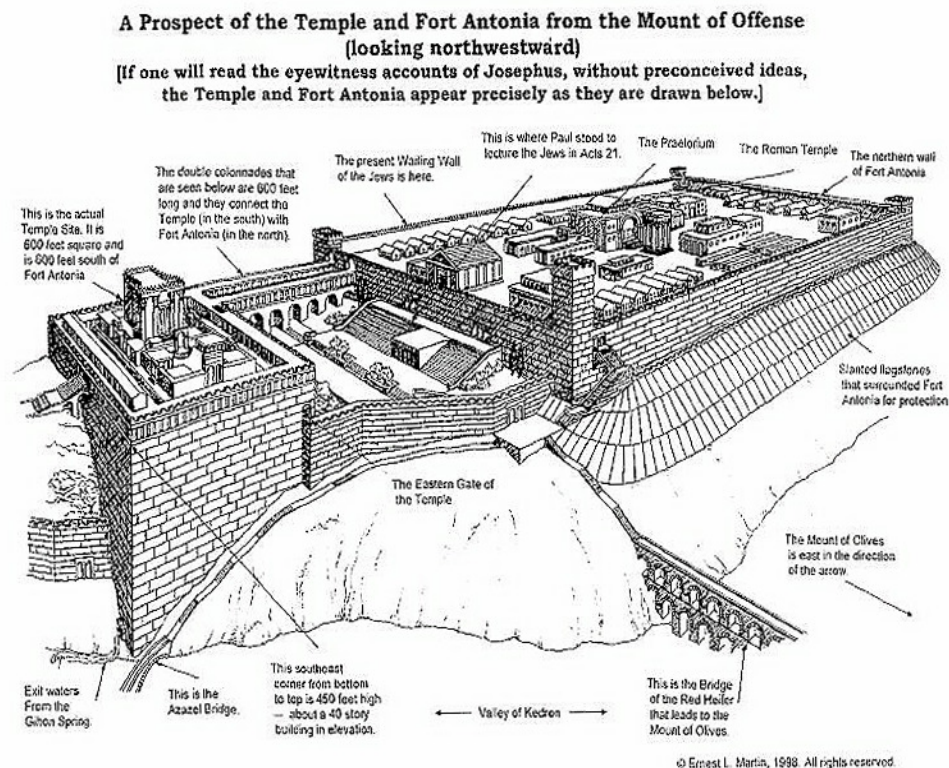
Of the Temple, Josephus said: "The colonnades were thirty cubits broad [45 feet], and the complete circuit of them, embracing [the colonnades to and from] the Tower of Antonia, measured six stades" [Wars of the Jews V.5,2] ...

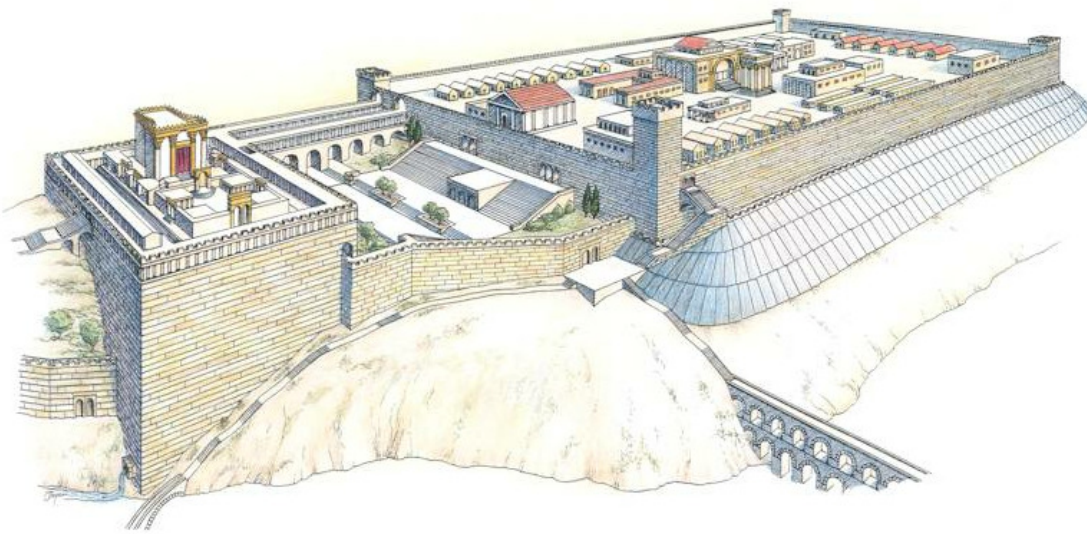
When one counted together the four stades [600 feet each] for the colonnades that surrounded the square of the Temple with the two colonnades (of two stades - one stade each) that were like two [parallel] appendages extending northward to the entrance to Fort Antonia, the combined length of those colonnades equaled six stades...

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...

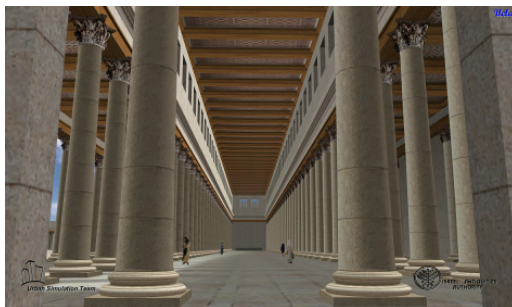
Josephus plainly stated as an eyewitness that the southern wall of Fort Antonia was located about a stade (600 feet) north of the northwestern corner of the outer Temple walls (with an open space between the two structures that was bridged by two colonnade roadways about 600 feet long)...

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 Kidron 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...





[Josephus wrote] "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" [**Antiquities of the Jews XV.,11,5**]



[This SE corner of this colonnade called the Royal Colonnade was the pinnacle of the Temple where Satan took Jesus in the temptation and tempted him to jump (Matthew 4:5-7). Also the porch was probably not anywhere near as high as the 18 story one that Solomon built. From other references it appears to have been about 8 or 9 stories high]...

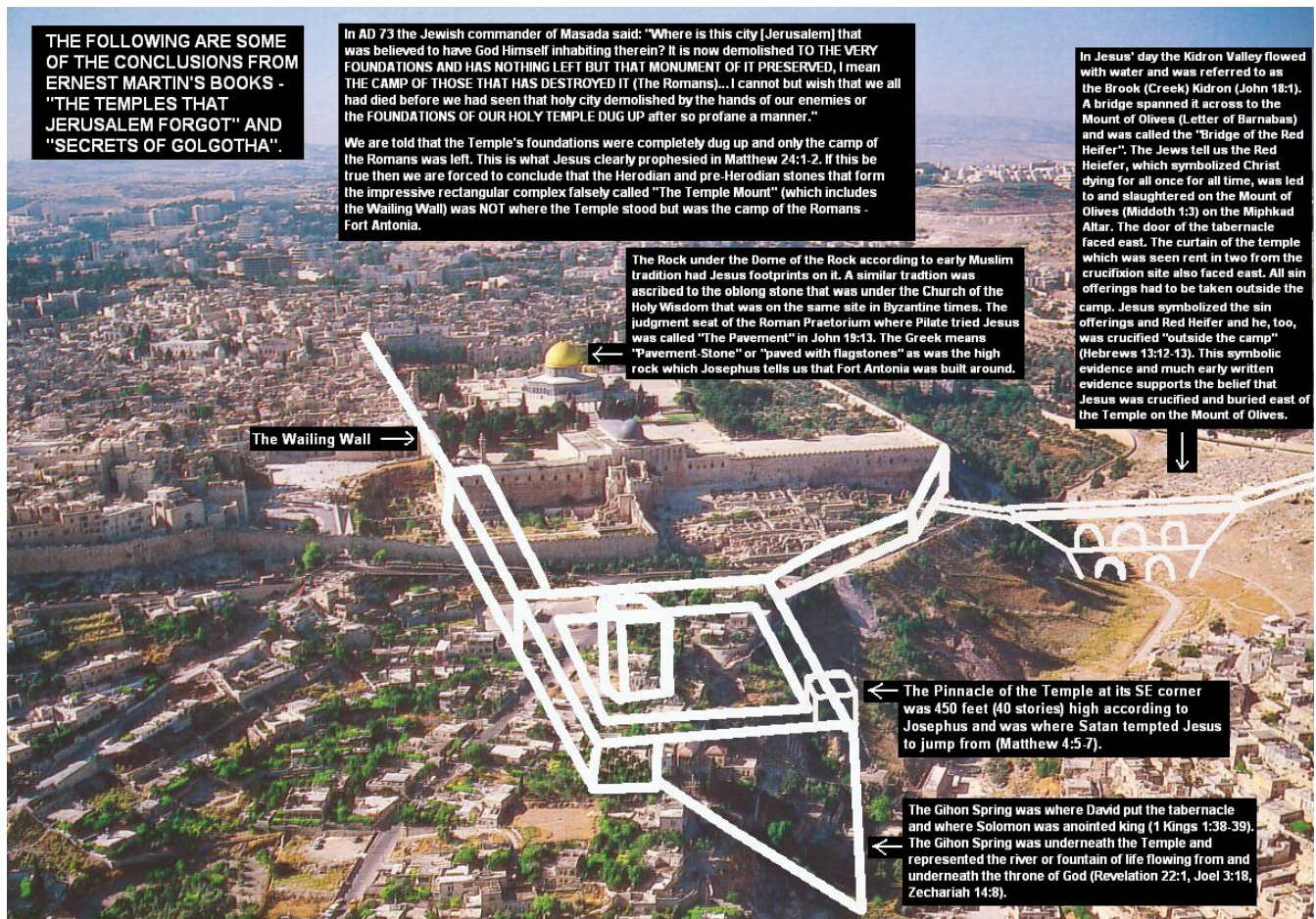
Josephus also tells us that the two elevated roadways from the northwestern angle of the Temple leading into Fort Antonia were also 600 feet (a stade) in length...The stade was the length of a stadium where sprint races (and other athletic events) took place. The normal stadium length was about 600 feet...

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" (**Wars of the Jews II.,12,1, 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 (**Wars of the Jews IV.3,12**) ...

Josephus informs us that the colonnades of the Temple were 45 feet wide (30 cubits) and about 38 feet high (25 cubits). 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. They led directly from Fort Antonia to the northwest corner 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...

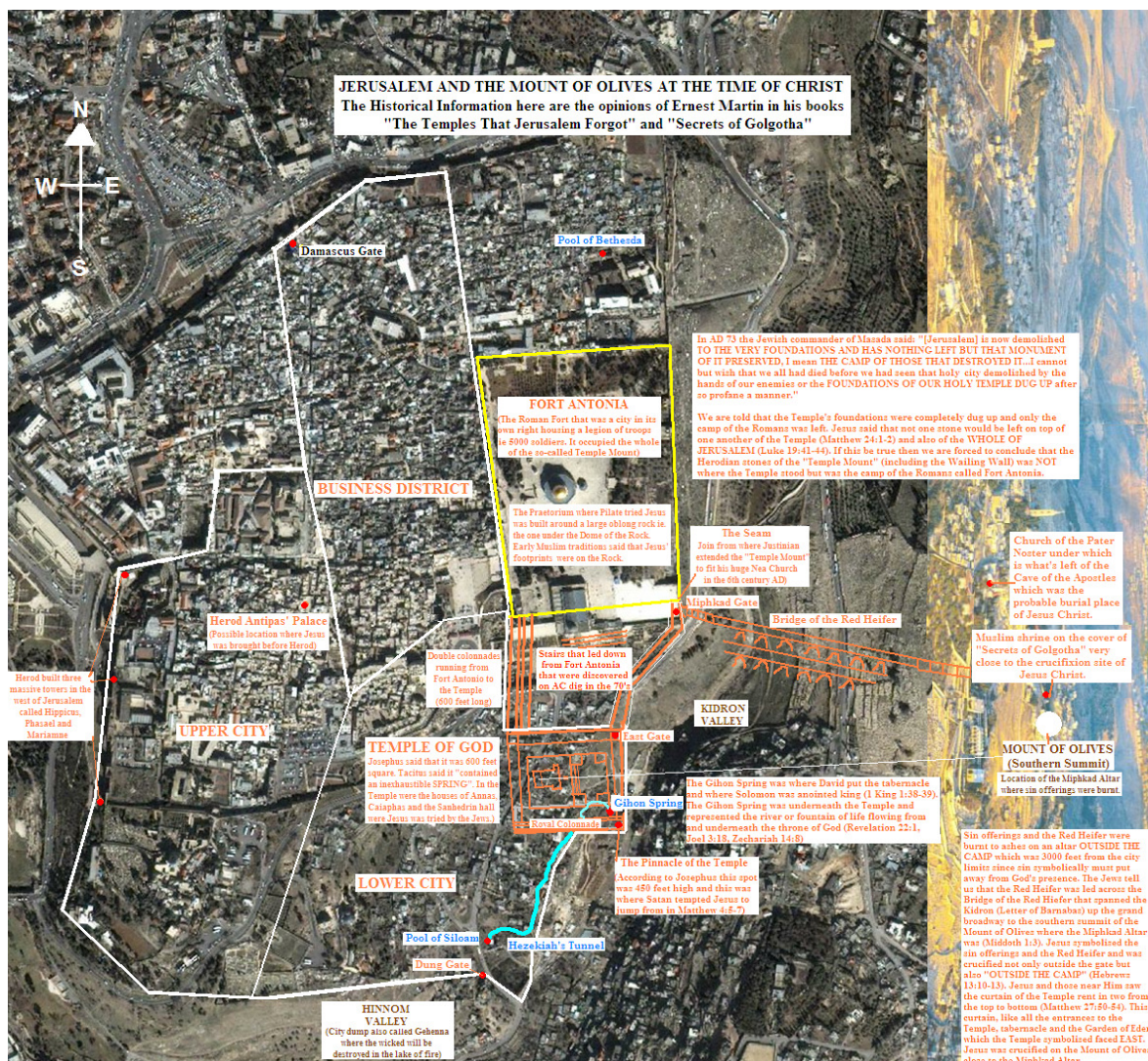


The narratives in Josephus clearly show that Fort Antonia could not have abutted directly to the Temple as we observe in almost all maps by modern scholars...

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...

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.



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) (**Acts 21:31**). 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" (**Acts 21:32**) 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" (**Acts 21:34-35**). 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**).

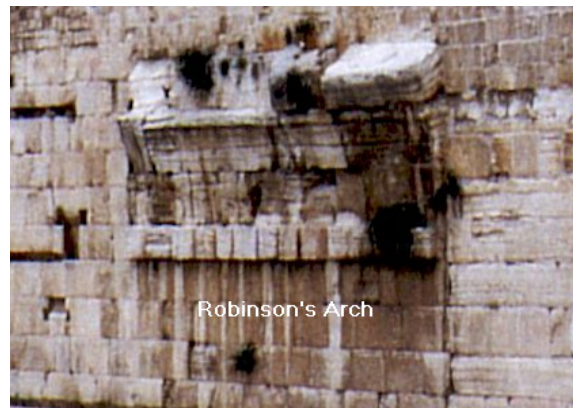
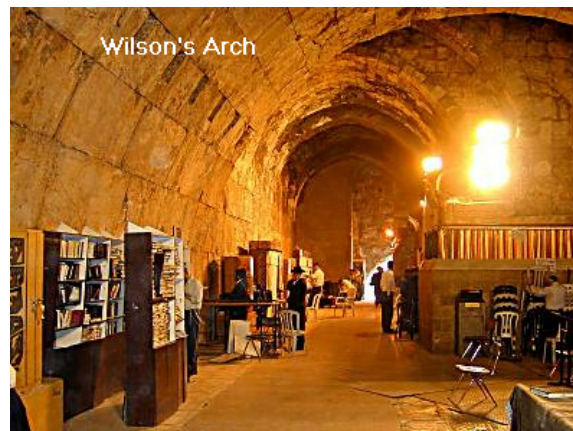
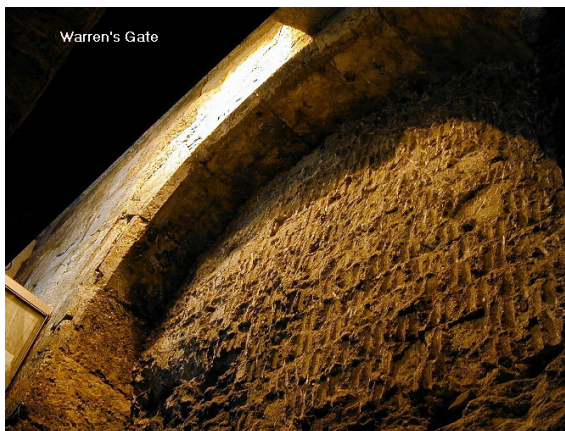
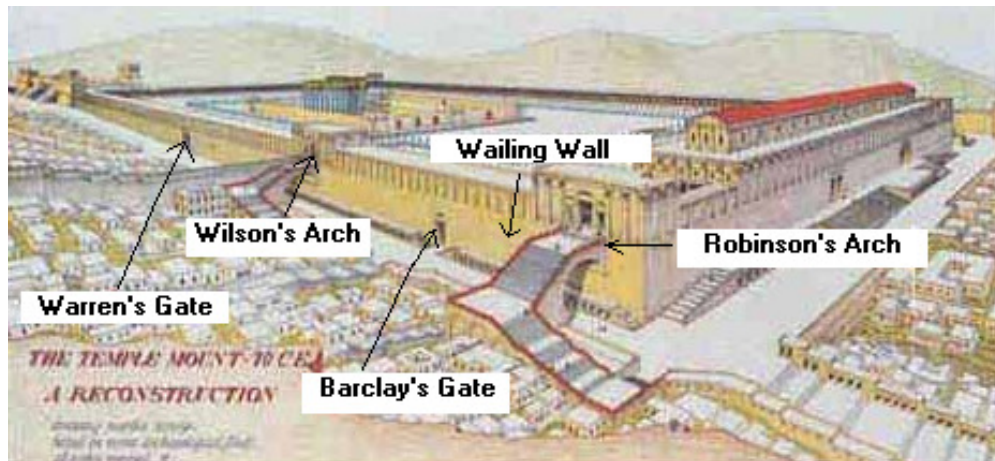
This shows the crowd was at the bottom of the stairs and at ground level in order to secure dirt (to throw into the air) which they got no doubt from the garden sites encompassing the area. Paul was then taken into Fort Antonia for his protection. All of this shows that the crowd was waiting for permission 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 (**Temples, p.402-404, 451, 426, 404, 443, 413-414, 418, 419, 418-419**).

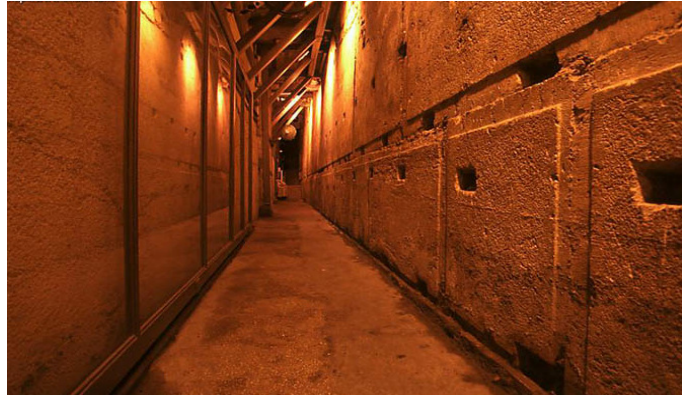
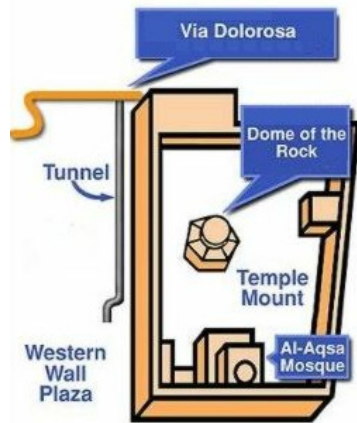
The Evidence for the Traditional Temple Mount Point of View

What evidence is there supporting the traditional point of view that the Haram where the Dome of the Rock is and the Al Aqsa mosque was the site of the Temple and how does it compare to the evidence that Ernest Martin has put forth for the Temple being located over the Gihon Spring to the south of the Haram? The bibletopics.com website gives the following details of the traditional point of view:

In the time of Jesus there were four entrances to the Temple Mount along the southern half of the Western Wall, and the remains of each are still discernible. Today they are named after nineteenth-century explorers of the remains of ancient Jerusalem. From south to north they are Robinson's Arch, Barclay's Gate, Wilson's Arch and Warren's Gate. The first two refer to entrances the traces of which can be seen in the exposed southern section of the Western Wall. At the level of the top of Wilson's arch was a bridge across the now filled-in Tyropeon Valley into the Temple Mount. The fourth entrance, Warren's Gate, is not visible from outside, but was discovered originally by the British military engineer Charles Warren when tunnelling below the level of the houses.



As part of the archaeological investigations of the Old City of Jerusalem from 1967 onwards, a tunnel has been driven along the Western Wall northwards from the complex of buildings at Wilson's Arch, below the level of the present houses. In recent years this has been opened up to visitors, and in May 1990 we were conducted as part of a guided party along the length of this tunnel. At that time only escorted parties were allowed; now, we understand, it is open to all at set times (<http://www.bibletopics.com/biblestudy/48j.htm>).



In the western tunnel the "Master Course" consists of four stones, the largest of which weighs 570 tons and is 44 feet long, 10 feet high and 12-16 feet deep. The next largest stone in the wall is 40 feet long. The traditionalists believe that these stones acted as a counterforce to the Jewish treasury on the other side of the wall.

It's natural that there would be gates for entering into Fort Antonio and there's nothing in the details of the arches and gates on the western wall to suggest that they were anything other than gates for entering Fort Antonio.

The Romans were fabulous engineers and how they were able to construct a roof for the Coliseum in Rome is still a mystery to engineers today. King Herod himself had a penchant for building the impossible. The port city Ceasarea and the massive man-made mountain called the Herodian were examples of this and the stone walls of the western wall are tribute to his engineers' great building skills. Herod built both the revamped Temple and Fort Antonio and it is natural that the fort was built very strong to wishstand attacks on the fort.

To the south of the southern wall excavators have unearthed some fascinating finds. They have found a Jewish street, Jewish mikvah baths, what is called the trumpeting stone because of its inscription that it was from where a trumpet proclaimed the sabbath and holy days and they also found a number of burn marks shaped as a series of arches.



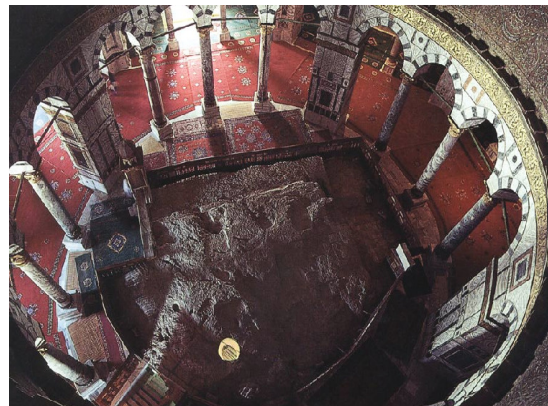
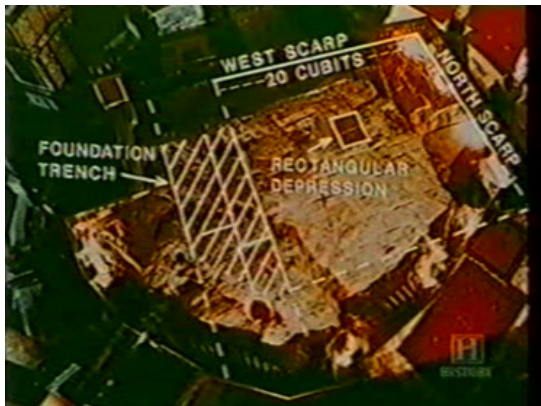
That section between the Temple and Fort Antonio which was about 600 feet square was a part of Jewish Jerusalem. Naturally there would be mikvah baths given its proximity to the Temple to the south. That they are closer to the Haram than the Gihon spring does give some circumstantial support to the traditional point of view.

The trumpeting stone is very close to the SW corner of the Haram and its closeness to the Haram compared to the Gihon spring also gives some circumstantial support to the traditional point of view though we know many loose stones from the Roman destruction were moved around to the new city that was built later on.

Another piece of evidence for the traditional point of view is some subjective evidence for the Dome of the Rock being the place of the Holy of holies. Leen Ritmeyer, the leading proponent of the accepted Temple Mount being the location of the Temple says that one wall of the Holy of holies was built over the rock indicated by a flat horizontal part on the rock.

Within the centre he points out a rectangular depression 2 cubits x 1.5 cubits in size which he believes was where the ark of the covenant rested. This is unlikely to be the site of the Temple as Ornan's threshing floor would have been on a flat surface not on a rocky outcrop.

Just to the SE of the Dome of the Rock infra-red senses have detected what appears to be a drainage ditch which has been interpreted as a drainage ditch for the blood of the sacrifices. This could be anything. In Fort Antonio it could have been a cistern, a sewer pipe or a drainage ditch for sacrifices for a Roman temple.



I would like to now quote in full a critique of Ernest Martin's work by Dr Leen Ritmeyer that is interspersed by Ernest Martin's rebuttal which can be found online at <http://askelm.com/temple/t010513.htm>:

A Critique by Dr. Leen Ritmeyer and a Rebuttal to Ritmeyer by Dr. Ernest L. Martin Concerning the New Research of Ernest L. Martin regarding the true site of the Temple in Jerusalem.

No one is better qualified from a professional sense to critique Dr. Martin's research on the location of the Temples in Jerusalem than Dr. Leen Ritmeyer. Not only did he work closely with Professor Benjamin Mazar and was the official architect of the archaeological excavation at Jerusalem from 1973 until its closure, but he is now considered by most scholars in the world as the chief authority on the location of the Temple Mount. He teaches in the archaeology department of the University of Leeds in England and is a

highly respected lecturer on Temple Mount studies in some of the most prestigious academic institutions and organizations. He could rightfully be called one of the top representatives of the traditional school of Temple experts that place the Temple within the confines of the Haram esh-Sharif (that all scholars have accepted as true, and this also including me until I started to look extensively into the subject in 1995). Until the appearance of my research study, all mainline scholars, historians and archaeologists (and this includes all Rabbis, all Christian priests and preachers and Muslim authorities) accepted without the slightest controversy (and with some expressing a reverence approaching divine inspiration) that the former Temples in Jerusalem were all located in the area of the Haram esh-Sharif.

What I show in my research is that the whole world (for the past 600 years) has been wrong and that the world needs to accept the truth of the documentary and biblical evidences that I give in my book and abridgments so that the truth will finally prevail in this most important issue. It can properly be stated that Dr. Ritmeyer could legitimately be considered a proper and qualified spokesman for all the traditionalists throughout the world who insist that the Temples were located within the precincts of the Haram esh-Sharif. As for me and my research, I am the lone anti-traditionalist who has brought forth the research to prove dogmatically that the world is thoroughly and totally *wrong*.

On the Web Page of Dr. Leen Ritmeyer is his critique of Dr. Martin's book "The Temples that Jerusalem Forgot" and his abridgment found on the ASK Web Page. The critique of Dr. Ritmeyer (produced below) can be read in full at his Web Page at <http://www.templemountonline.com> . In this rebuttal, Dr. Martin first gives a section of Dr. Ritmeyer's critique and then comments on that portion. He then follows the archaeologist/architect with every word stated by Dr. Ritmeyer followed by a response from Dr. Martin. The first words of Dr. Ritmeyer are given in the paragraph below, and continue to the end of his critique.

The argument concerns the whereabouts of the Temples that were built in Jerusalem.

Dr. Leen Ritmeyer starts out by writing:

"In the last few issues of Biblical Archaeology Review (BAR) an advertisement appeared under the heading "Who moved the Temple" advertising a book called "The Temples that Jerusalem Forgot" by a certain Ernest Martin. Part of the advertisement is a strange drawing, which shows the Temple outside the Temple Mount. Many people have asked me to comment on this and below you will find my critique of this outrageous idea."

Ernest L. Martin addresses the first critique by Ritmeyer:

Leen Ritmeyer in his beginning statement says that my descriptive picture of the Temple and Fort Antonia complex which has appeared in *BAR* for the past two years is "a strange drawing" based on an "outrageous idea." This response is because of Ritmeyer's ignorance or disbelief at what Josephus (the first century Jewish historian) describes about the Temple and Fort Antonia in his writings recorded in his *Antiquities* and *Wars*. Josephus as an eyewitness in 70 A.D. gave an adequate description of how those buildings appeared on the eve of Jerusalem's destruction by the Romans. All I did was to

depict in a drawing what Josephus said about the positions and dimensions of the Temple and Fort Antonia. This drawing that provokes Ritmeyer's ire is simply a replica of the Temple and Fort Antonia complex as precisely described by Josephus. Let me explain how the drawing came about.

Four years ago I commissioned a professional artist to sit at a table with me and to sketch a picture following the exact words of Josephus in all sections of his literary works in which he described the Temple and Fort Antonia complex. I simply read to the artist what Josephus stated. The artist then began to sketch the architectural descriptions and precise measurements on a drawing board. Josephus made some cogent and profound observations that scholars today avoid believing and they normally consider Josephus as an unreliable observer and recorder. This is because what Josephus describes as the Temple and Fort Antonia does NOT fit any part (or in any way) the Haram esh-Sharif that scholars believe today to be the remains of the Temple. The truth is, Josephus as an eyewitness was describing the Temple in a very different manner than that found in the Haram esh-Sharif that Ritmeyer and other scholars accept today.

Josephus said the Temple of Herod was built high up on a platform that had four walls around it forming a precise square of 600 feet on each side. This description in no way fits the dimensions of the Haram. Josephus said the wall of its southeast corner had its foundations directly in the deepest part of the Kidron Valley (in the streambed itself) and that its height was 300 cubits (450 feet, or about the height of a modern 40 story building). Near the northwest corner Josephus said this external Temple wall was connected to Fort Antonia by two side-by-side colonnade roadways (each 600 feet long). Josephus then said that Fort Antonia itself was built around a notable "Rock" that was viewed as the centerpiece feature of the interior of the Fort (which was also known as the Praetorium). This well-recognized "Rock" in the Praetorium around which Fort Antonia was built was called the *lithostrotos* in the Gospel of John (19:13) and Christ stood on it when judged by Pilate. Josephus said that Antonia's size was much larger than the Temple (he described Fort Antonia as the size of a city and it contained a full legion of Roman troops with many open spaces for military exercises and training). Fort Antonia was so large that Josephus said it obscured the whole of the Temple square from the north. These plain and simple descriptions made by Josephus are depicted in the drawing that Ritmeyer dislikes and they are in precise accord with what Josephus (as an eyewitness) states in the clearest of language.

Another eyewitness account was given by Aristeeas in 285 B.C. He said the Temple at Jerusalem had within its precincts a natural spring of water, and Tacitus the Roman historian in 100 A.D. also mentioned this inexhaustible spring that was located within the walls of the Temple just before its destruction by the Romans. In my replication in *BAR*, the professional artist was able to comfortably fit the 600 feet square Temple with its 40 stories high platform as being located over the Gihon Spring (the only spring of water in Jerusalem within a radius of five miles). It was also simple and very logical to show the two colonnade roadways near the northwest angle of the external Temple wall extending a further 600 feet northward to intersect with the southwest corner of Fort Antonia. All geographical features mentioned by Josephus, and incorporating the eyewitness account of Aristeeas, and the statement of Tacitus (and by other eyewitness accounts that I have recorded in my book "The Temples that Jerusalem Forgot") fit precisely into place as shown by Josephus. To be sure of the truthfulness of the drawing, the artist reviewed the latest editions of Josephus' literary works to scrutinize each geographical feature in a precise way. It took a month of fine detailed research to come up with the final drawing. This drawing is accurate. Since that time (four years ago), numerous scholars have painstakingly gone through those geographical details given by Josephus (which I would ask Ritmeyer to do) and they have come to the identical evaluation that is displayed in the drawing in *BAR* that Ritmeyer finds offensive. In the drawing we are only reproducing what Josephus stated with utmost precision. Ritmeyer knows of these

profound differences in all points but dismisses them by stating that Josephus was wrong in what he stated. The truth is, Josephus was describing a different building not even associated in a geographical sense with the area of the Haram esh-Sharif.

This is a sad commentary on the state of archaeological appraisal on these matters. It is time to accept Josephus's descriptions exactly! I challenge anyone to read what Josephus wrote (along with the other eyewitnesses) and honest scholars will admit that what is shown in the drawing will be vindicated. What irritates Ritmeyer is the fact that this description of Josephus cannot show the Temple to be located inside the Haram esh-Sharif where he wants it to be. The true placement of the Temple (as the historical eyewitnesses state) is over the Gihon Spring that is about 1000 feet south of the Dome of the Rock that was built over the present centerpiece "Rock" of the Haram esh-Sharif. Indeed, if one would simply accept Josephus' description of the Temple (with his plain and simple measurements) and then position the Temple over the Dome of the Rock where Ritmeyer demands, one would witness a square building 40 stories high with the platform of the Temple higher in elevation than the summit of the Mount of Olives! Ouch! Also, if Josephus' Temple is placed within the Haram, the southeastern corner wall of the Temple would NOT be in the center of the streambed of the Kidron Valley as Josephus clearly attests it was. It would be on the level part of the ridge and not even near the edge of the Kidron precipice.

In fact, if Josephus' measurements of the Temple and his basic description of it were accepted by all reasonable people (as they should be), to place the Temple within the Haram esh-Sharif that Ritmeyer insists is proper would make a platform so high that no one from the Mount of Olives could look down into its courts as was an essential part of Temple rituals. On the other hand, let the whole of the Haram to be reckoned as Fort Antonia (which it was), then we still witness Antonia's four mammoth walls constructed over and around a notable "Rock" outcropping that Josephus said was the outstanding feature around which Fort Antonia was built. Without doubt, the Haram was Fort Antonia.

Consequently, it is NOT my drawing in *BAR* that is "strange" and "outrageous" as Ritmeyer states, but it would be Ritmeyer's Temple (using Josephus' eyewitness measurements) being located inside the Haram esh-Sharif that would be totally outrageous. But strange as it may seem, since the period of the Crusades, it has become common to accept the notable "Rock" around which Josephus said Fort Antonia was built as the site of the Temple of Herod. I have proved, however, in my book and in my abridgment found on the ASK Web Page (<http://www.askelm.com/>) that this identification is wrong. Its acceptance is based on a concoction of false religious imaginations that stem from ideas and principles promoted in a corrupt period when men utilized a "Dark Age" mentality regarding their conception of what represented their holy places.

Continuing the Critique by Ritmeyer:

"The main thrust behind Ernest Martin's latest idea about the location of the Temple over the Gihon Spring is, according to Michael Germano, to "serve as the awaited stimulus for the building of Jerusalem's Third Temple by shifting our collective focus from the Haram esh-Sharif to the area of the Gihon Spring". Therefore this proposal should be welcomed by groups who are actively engaged in promoting the building of a new Temple in Jerusalem. At first Kaufman's theory was adopted as it opened up the theoretical possibility of building a temple next to the Dome of the Rock and later that of Sagiv, who places the Temple to the

south of this Muslim shrine. The Messianic expectations of such groups are so strong that archaeological evidence is of little if no relevance to them. The Palestinians, who claim that a Jewish Temple never existed on the Haram, should be very pleased with this latest proposal."

Comments by Ernest L. Martin:

If the Palestinians and those expecting a new Third Temple are "very pleased" with my research, it is because they have enough sense to recognize the truth of the facts. If Ritmeyer thinks the academics among the Palestinians would be "very pleased" with my suggestions, does he really think they would delight in outright error that Ritmeyer accuses me of promoting? I agree with Ritmeyer in the fact that the Palestinian scholars would be "very pleased" with my work of showing the Temple was NEVER associated with the Haram. This is because they can see that the documentary evidence I provide is first class and highly accurate. But Ritmeyer's opinion concerning certain Jewish and/or Christian groups who wish to rebuild the Temple is thoroughly wrong. Neither Dr. Germano nor I have said or written that "the main thrust" for my historical and geographical research locating the Temples over the Gihon Spring was to stimulate the building of Jerusalem's Third Temple. On the contrary, my main intent is to show conclusively that all scholars are wrong (including Ritmeyer) when they maintain that the Temples were situated within the confines of the Haram esh-Sharif. The true site of the Temples was over the Gihon Spring.

True, Dr. Germano did feel my new research (which he considered to be accurate) could provoke a renewed interest in the building of a Third Temple, but nowhere in the Temple research within my book or in my Web Page abridgment have I personally said such a thing as Ritmeyer accuses me of promoting. Ritmeyer uses the age-old method of disparagement by grouping Dr. Germano and me in an *ad hominem* manner with certain Messianic groups whose religious ideas many scholars hold in disdain. Note how Ritmeyer (without justification) places Dr. Germano and me among those ones whom he claims consider archaeological evidence to be of little or no worth. This unworthy evaluation is pure nonsense. As for me, I hold archaeological evidence to be of extreme importance, and I am assured Dr. Germano does the same.

There is one point that I do insist upon when looking at archaeological evidence. In all circumstances, one must first evaluate the eyewitness historical accounts and let them prevail in all methods of interpretation and use the archaeological evidence in a secondary and corroborative sense. All archaeologists worth their salt understand this principle to be true. And, in regard to locating the Temple in Jerusalem, there is not one bit of identifiable archaeological evidence that suggests the Haram esh-Sharif is the Temple Mount. Oh yes, there is a piece of stone that was discovered near the southwest corner of the Haram that says an elevated spot (apparently above its *in situ* position) was the place for "blowing the trumpet." To say this refers to the blowing of the Shofar for Temple rituals is pure guessing. In fact, the stone site could equally refer to the place for blowing bugles for denoting time periods and military commands associated with Fort Antonia. Josephus had a whole section in his description of the Roman army on how trumpets and bugles were used extensively in all military operations (just as our modern armies use them). Since Fort Antonia was originally built by Herod for Jewish purposes and Hebrew inscriptions describing military areas in the Fort would be expected.

Listen folks, let us be honest about this matter. There is NOT ONE archaeological item found in or around Jerusalem that denotes without doubt that the Haram is indeed the site of the former Temples. Pure speculation is reigning supreme in this matter. For any archaeologist to say differently is stepping far out of line. It is time that this subjective

reasoning of the modern interpreters comes to a halt and that the modern archaeologists return to stating the truth that all the Temples were built over the Gihon Spring as the eyewitness evidence dogmatically states. As I have abundantly pointed out in my book, it is really without doubt that the architectural and geographical evidence supplied to us by Josephus, the Holy Scriptures and other historians shows that the Temple square was located over the Gihon Spring.

Continuing the Critique of Ritmeyer:

"Martin, who equates Zion with the site of the Temple, begins with stating that Zion was limited to the southern end of the southeastern ridge of Jerusalem and that the Temple was built there because of the Gihon Spring. "The Bible even indicated that the Temple was abutting to the northern side of the City of David", he says. Martin further claims that David himself placed the Ark of the Covenant over the Gihon Spring, quoting Ps. 87 which says "all my springs are in thee" and also Ps. 116, "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 the Temple], in the midst [center] of thee, O Jerusalem". Martin tries to derive further support from his interpretation of the Book of Revelation, where we are told that those who were thirsty could drink from "the fountain (spring) of water that issued from the New Jerusalem that would come down from heaven to earth".

Comments by Ernest L. Martin:

Yes, the Temple was located "on the sides of the north" of Mount Zion (Isaiah 14:13; Psalm 48:2). This makes the Temple to be abutting to the north side of the City of Zion (that is, the City of David). So close was the Temple courts to the City of David that Aristaeas in the third century B.C. (an eyewitness) said one could look down from the northern side of the Citadel (the City of David) and look directly into the center of the Temple courts where the priests did their functions. This would be an absurd statement if the Temple were located (as Ritmeyer insists) 1000 feet north of the City of David and in the higher elevated area now occupied by the Haram esh-Sharif. Truthfully, the Temple Mount of David and Solomon was just a short distance north of Zion (it was abutting to the City of David and positioned on the southeast ridge). The Temple was actually located on the Ophel mound situated directly over the Gihon Spring.

Also, there is not a shadow of doubt that David constructed a "Tabernacle" which contained the Ark of the Covenant and placed that "Tabernacle" around and over the Gihon Spring where it served as the official "Temple" for 38 years before Solomon solemnized his Temple of stone higher up the Ophel hill and directly above the Gihon Spring (II Samuel 6:17; I Kings 1:32-53). Indeed, let us remember the two historical accounts that I have given above that show conclusively that the Temple in 285 B.C. had within its precincts a natural spring of water. Aristaeas stated this in his eyewitness account and it was reiterated by the famous Roman historian, Tacitus in about 100 A.D. (*History*, Bk.5, para.12). (which prime references Ritmeyer does not even mention in his critique because they destroy the very foundation of his theory). But there is more. In Psalm 87:7 it states dogmatically that there were "springs" in God's House which the psalmist says was in "Zion" and in "the City of God."

I also give in my book and in my Web Page abridgment many references in the Psalms written by David when the Ark was positioned over the Gihon Spring that show there

was running spring of water within all the former Temples. There are several prophecies that state that even future Temples will have running spring waters emerging from their inner precincts, including the New Testament reference to the New Jerusalem. There is no record whatever that any spring (other than the Gihon Spring) has existed within 5 miles of Jerusalem and there is no geological or historical proof that there was any natural spring of water in the entire region of the Haram esh-Sharif.

Besides this, I cite over ten biblical references that show the Temple was located in the "center" of Jerusalem, and not in the extreme lop-sided northeast section where the present Haram is found. Indeed, the Haram is far away from Jerusalem's *center* and is located on the farthest northeast corner of ancient Jerusalem. All of these historical and biblical references Ritmeyer refuses even to mention because these eyewitness accounts are fatal to his theory that the Haram is the Temple Mount. I want to be kind to him, but his dishonesty in leaving out my central evidences because they clearly dispute his theory is not being a gentleman in the least and they are contrary to the true spirit of proper scholarship.

Continuing the Critique by Ritmeyer:

"He [Martin] then moves on to the prophecy of Jesus who, according to his interpretation, told his disciples that 'not one stone of the Temple and its support buildings' would be left on top the other. And so all the walls of the Temple and the Temple Mount were torn down to their foundations just as Jesus prophesied they would be. Only the Antonia escaped the destruction of 70 AD, which he equates with the Herodian Temple Mount [no, it is Ritmeyer who erroneously equates the Haram with the Temple Mount]."

Comments by Ernest L. Martin:

My dear Ritmeyer, I gave eyewitness evidence recorded by Josephus that the Romans so completely destroyed the Temple and the City of Jerusalem (as Jesus prophesied) that if a stranger would by chance would have come upon the site of former Jerusalem after its destruction, he would not have believed there had once been a City and a Temple in the area.

Jesus said: "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** [Jerusalem] **even with the ground**, and thy children within thee: and **they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another**; because thou knowest not the time of thy visitation" (Luke 19:43,44). Notice the closeness of Christ's prophecy with the description of Josephus about the condition of Jerusalem after the war.

Josephus said the same thing (and almost precisely): "It [Jerusalem] was **so thoroughly laid even with the ground** by those that dug it up **to the foundation**, that there was nothing left to make those that came thither believe it [Jerusalem] had ever been inhabited" (*War* VII.1,1).

Besides this, we have the eyewitness testimony of Eleazar, who was the Jewish commander of those Jewish forces left in Masada before most committed suicide. This Jewish commander said: "It [Jerusalem] **is now demolished to the very foundations** [even the foundational stones were all overturned within the whole of Jerusalem], and hath nothing left [of Jerusalem] but THAT MONUMENT of it preserved, I mean the CAMP OF THOSE [the Roman camp] that hath destroyed it [Jerusalem], WHICH [CAMP] STILL

DWELLS UPON ITS RUINS: some unfortunate old men also lie upon **the ashes of the Temple** [then in total ruins – all that was left of the Temple was ashes], and a few women are there preserved alive by the enemy [for prostitution purposes], for our bitter shame and reproach" (*War* VII,8,7, emphases are mine).

Nothing of Jewish Jerusalem or the Temple (including their foundation stones) was left standing and this is exactly what Jesus prophesied would occur. All buildings in Jerusalem, including the Temple and its walls, had been ***laid even with the ground***. The only thing left (as stated by Eleazar and recorded by Josephus who also knew the same facts) was a lone facility identified as the Roman fortress that had been in Jerusalem before the war began. That fortress was Fort Antonia and we have the eyewitness account of Eleazar that that military facility still remained standing.

Indeed, look at the archaeological facts today as they present themselves to all people. Those four prodigious walls of the Haram are still in place in their lower courses and they certainly survived the war. All archaeologists and historians today (including Ritmeyer) readily admit that ***the Haram esh-Sharif is the only facility of pre-destruction Jerusalem that survived the war with its foundation stones still in evidence***. Those four Herodian walls of Fort Antonia and its interior buildings were the only man-made structures that Titus the Roman general allowed to remain for the protection of the Tenth Legion left to monitor Roman affairs. And Josephus said Antonia was built around a prominent "Rock" just like we see in the Haram esh-Sharif under the Dome of the Rock. It is a building complex built just like a Roman fort. It remained and was continued to be used by the Romans as a Fort until 289 A.D., but the Temple did not survive the war. Even Eleazar said the Temple "was in ashes" (absolutely nothing of the Temple survived, as Jesus said would happen). The Haram was NOT in ashes. The truth is, all the Temples were built over the Gihon Spring about 600 feet south of the southern wall of the Haram.

The Haram esh-Sharif was actually the Praetorium (the Roman encampment) or what Josephus called Fort Antonia. It must be emphasized that Josephus said it had been built around a prominent "Rock" formation within its precincts. That "Rock" outcropping is still there for all of us to see and is now located under the building called the Arabic built Dome of the Rock. Josephus said this "Rock" was a part of Antonia, it was NOT part of the Temple. Nowhere is it remotely mentioned in Scripture that the Temple was built over or around a permanent outcropping of "Rock" (I explain this at length in my book and abridgment). But a major "Rock" was the central feature around which Antonia was constructed.

Continuing the Critique of Ritmeyer:

"He [Martin] then refers to some remarks made by rabbis and pilgrims that, according to him, say that the Temple site was never built on by Gentiles and that therefore the Dome of the Rock could not have been built on the former location of the Jewish temple."

Comments by Ernest L. Martin:

That's right, I do mention these early Jewish authorities who give information that the Haram esh-Sharif could NOT be the site of the Temple. But Ritmeyer simply avoids giving these abundant and conclusive historical observations because they indicate in no uncertain terms that the Haram esh-Sharif could NOT be the area of the Temple Mount. He refuses to comment on these powerful historical and geographical facts because they show that he and his other scholar friends are as wrong as a three dollar bill. This

avoidance of mentioning some of my cardinal proofs is an outrageous attempt to mislead his readers because these very references are capable of proving (*even alone* and without a shadow of doubt) that the Haram is Fort Antonia, and NOT the Temple Mount. His avoidance of my prime evidences shows he is unfair with me, himself and with his readers. Let us look at what Ritmeyer deliberately left out because the historical references prove my point conclusively.

We have absolute documentary evidence that 70 Jewish families in the seventh century were allowed by Omar (the Second Caliph) to settle in Jerusalem. They informed Omar that they wanted to reside *in the SOUTHERN* part of Jerusalem so they could be near the Siloam water system ***and to be near the site of their former Temple***. Omar, who was then building his Al Aqsa Mosque in the southern extremity of the Haram, allowed them their request. This historical fact is found in a fragment of a letter discovered in the Geniza library of Egypt now in Cambridge University in England. Notice what it states:

"Omar agreed 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 waters of Shiloah, which could be used for immersion. This was granted them [the 70 Jewish families] 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 for many generations." (emphasis mine)

This *southern* area was *south* of the southern wall of the Haram (where Omar had his Al Aqsa Mosque) because Professor Benjamin Mazar (when I was working with him at the archaeological excavations along the southern wall of the Haram) discovered two palatial Umayyad buildings close to the southern wall of the Haram that occupied a great deal of space south of the southern Haram wall. Those 70 families certainly had their settlement *further south* than these ruins of Muslim government buildings. Interestingly, in this document (and in all pre-Crusade records), Jews showed no interest in the "Rock" now under the Dome of the Rock. Their sole attention was to the area *SOUTH* of Haram and the Muslim government buildings. Also, when the Karaite Jews a century later settled in Jerusalem, they also went *to this same southern area* which was the former site of the City of David on the southeast ridge as well as adjacently across the Kidron into the Silwan area. These first Jewish settlers certainly knew that the former Temple site was well *SOUTH* of the Haram esh-Sharif. The Temple was near the "waters of Shiloah" (waters from the Gihon).

In fact, as late as Maimonides (during the Crusade period), the great Jewish philosopher said the Temple was then in total ruins (while the Haram area was NOT in ruins but was heavily built upon by the Christians and Muslims). Then slightly later, the Jewish authority Rabbi David Kimchi also stated that the Jewish Temple *was still in utter ruins* and (Kimchi added the important observation) that no Christian or Muslim *had ever built over the spot* where the true Temples stood. This express dogmatism of Rabbi David Kimchi, one of the great biblical commentators of the Jews (otherwise known as the RADAQ) who lived from about 1160 to 1235 A.D., is of utmost value. Rabbi Kimchi said that as late as his time the region of the former Temples *still remained in ruins* and that NO GENTILES (whether Roman, Byzantine or Muslim) **HAD YET BUILT ANY OF THEIR BUILDINGS OVER THE REAL SITE OF THE TEMPLE** (emphases mine). He said (and I quote him): "And [the Temple] is still in ruins, [in] that the Temple site **WAS NEVER BUILT ON BY THE NATIONS**" (see my Web Page abridgment for official references).

These comments of Rabbi David Kimchi are first-class Jewish evidence in about 1235 A.D., and they show in no uncertain terms that the built-up area of the Haram esh-Sharif WAS NOT the Temple site recognized by all the Jews (because it had long been built over by the Christians and Muslims). It was still known in this later period that the real Temple area was located over and around the Gihon Spring on the southeast ridge which was in Rabbi Kimchi's time outside the walls of Jerusalem. It was a derelict area used for a dump. I show clearly in my research that the first Jewish person ever to side with the Christians and Muslims and state that the Dome of the Rock area was the region of the former Jewish Temples was Benjamin of Tudela in the late twelfth century.

At the time of Benjamin of Tudela, some Jews began to go over to Dome of the Rock as the Temple site because they believed David's tomb had been found on the western hill (which they then began *falsely* to call "Zion"). This erroneous identification of David's tomb on the western hill (mentioned by Benjamin of Tudela) caused Jews to abandon the southeastern ridge as the proper City of David. So, they transported "Zion" to that western hill, and began to accept the Dome of the Rock area advocated by the Christians and Muslims as their new Temple site. As a consequence, all scholars who lived from the time of the Crusades to the decade of 1875 to 1885 (a period of 600 long years) were in total ERROR in placing "Zion" on the western hill. But the scholars finally succumbed to the historical evidence. They finally returned "Zion" to its proper southeast location. It is now time for all scholars and archaeologists to return the Temple to the Gihon Spring area. When they do, the greatest ERROR being perpetuated in Jerusalem's geographical history will have been corrected.

Continuing the Critique by Ritmeyer:

"Martin then goes on to interpret Josephus who said that the Temple Mount was "a precise square of one stadium length on each side of about 600 feet". The southeastern corner of the outer Temple walls was, according to him, "located directly over the very bottom of the Kidron Valley (the bedrock center) and extended upwards 300 cubits or 450 feet". The Western Wall where Jews pray today also gets a rough treatment [by Martin] as they have only be doing so for the last 430 years. Martin asserts that "the Jewish people today at their Wailing Wall are NOT praying at a wall of their former Temples".

Comments by Ernest L. Martin:

This is an absolute fact and it is proven (among other writings) by the research of Meir Ben Dov (the deputy of Professor Benjamin Mazar at the excavation near the Haram) in his book published in 1983 by the Israel Ministry of Defence (along with Mordechai Naor and Zeev Aner) titled: "The Western Wall -(Hakotel)." The truth is, there is NO HISTORICAL RECORD to show Jews assembling at the Western (Wailing) Wall before the time of the Turkish Sultan Selim and his son Suleiman the Magnificent in the early sixteenth century. I have shown clearly in my book on the Temples that the first "Western Wall" of Jewish tradition was that wall of the inner Holy of Holies (NOT the western external wall now used as the Wailing Wall by the present-day Jewish authorities) and that first "Western Wall" was located in ruins from a fourth century "Temple" built by the Jews in the time of Constantine and Julian the Apostate over the Gihon Spring. However, Ritmeyer fails to say anything about this extensive research of mine on this matter because it thoroughly destroys his erroneous assessment that the Haram esh-Sharif is the Temple Mount.

Continuing the Critique of Ritmeyer:

"I have been asked to give a critique of this theory. The weakness of this proposal lies in the fact that it consists of Martin's personal interpretation of some Bible passages and other historical references only and does not refer to results of the many archaeological excavations, which have taken place in Jerusalem since 1967."

Comment by Ernest L. Martin:

I do not refer to any archaeological results because Jesus said there would not even be foundational stones left of Jerusalem and the Temple. They were all carted away, and as late as Eusebius in the fourth century he told us that some stones from the early Jerusalem and even the Temple were then being used to build the Roman city of Aelia that then occupied the northwestern ridge. There are simply no archaeological remains left in our period over 1900 years after the war of destruction.

Continuing the Critique of Ritmeyer:

"The first time the name of Zion is mentioned is when David captured the stronghold of Zion from the Jebusites and called it the City of David (2 Sam. 5.7). When Solomon had finished building the Temple, he brought up the Ark of the Covenant "out of the city of David, which is Zion" (1 Kings 8.1). This makes it quite clear that the Temple was located outside the original Zion, where the Gihon Spring was located, and that Martin is wrong to equate the Temple with Zion."

Comment by Ernest L. Martin:

Ritmeyer's appraisal is pure nonsense and hardly deserves an answer from me because there are abundant scriptural references that the Temple Mount is often called "Mount Zion" and that the two terms are often identical. Indeed, as soon as David placed the "Tabernacle" for the Ark at the Gihon Spring (and certainly when Solomon built the Temple on the Ophel hill above the Gihon) the Temple itself was then said to be located "in Zion." See Psalm 48 (all of it) where it shows the Temple as then being "in Zion." More than that, since a cardinal symbol of the Old Testament is the fact that "God dwelt in the Temple," this fact is simply expanded by incorporation when we read many verses speaking of God "dwelling in Zion" (Psalms 9:11; 76:2). Psalm 65:1-4 even states that God's Temple is "in Zion." Psalm 99:1,2 states that God dwells between the Cherubim "in Zion." And Joel 3:17, 21 shows the Temple "in Zion." Indeed, there are a score of other places that do the same thing. It is absurd reasoning on the part of Ritmeyer to maintain that "Zion" cannot be reckoned the Temple site. It most certainly is in many verses. And folks, the original "Mount Zion" was located *SOUTH* of the Haram esh-Sharif. It was located from the Ophel mound above the Gihon Spring and then southward to a place where the Tyropoeon and Kidron valleys merge. This was the real "Zion," and it is where the original Temples were located. Ritmeyer is very wrong in his absurd and childish critique.

Continuing the Critique of Ritmeyer:

"The archaeological evidence also negates such a possibility. Reich and Shukon, who excavated the Gihon Spring and its near surroundings found the massive remains of a Jebusite fortified reservoir and of a tower, which have been in use till at least the end of the First Temple period . These remains cannot possibly belong to a Temple."

Comment by Ernest L. Martin:

Reich and Shukon are simply guessing. These archaeologists do not believe the Temple was located over the Gihon Spring, so they have to guess that the stones are from some other source. Let me be plain. These guesses are just that – *guesses* that are not based on the historical evidence that I have provided.

Continuing the Critique of Ritmeyer:

"Solomon built the Temple where David had build [sic] an altar in the place where the Angel stood overlooking the City of David. The angel, which was going to destroy Jerusalem, stood outside the City of David (Zion) on higher ground from which he could look down upon it (2 Sam. 24.16)."

Comment by Ernest L. Martin:

There is NOT the slightest indication in II Samuel 24:16 that the angel was standing on higher ground than the City of David. Ritmeyer is presenting nothing but wishful thinking without historical or geographical relevance.

Continuing the Critique of Ritmeyer:

"David build there an altar in the threshingfloor of Araunah. Threshingfloors are never found inside cities or in valleys where there is no wind to blow away the chaff, but always near mountain tops . The Temple was therefore build [sic] outside of what was then known as Zion and higher up the mountain."

Comment by Ernest L. Martin:

As I point out in my abridgment (which Ritmeyer claims to have read), threshingfloors are indeed *FLOORS*. They are not built on a jagged "Rock" like the "Rock" under the Dome of the Rock that Ritmeyer claims was the site of the threshingfloor. In no way could such a jagged "Rock" be considered (even in ancient times) as a *FLOOR* (that is, a threshingfloor).

Continuing the Critique of Ritmeyer:

"The name Zion is not so much a precise location, but rather the name of the city of Jerusalem as the religious and political capital of Israel throughout the history of Israel. The city had its beginnings on the south-east hill and later spread to the western hill. Ps. 48:2 "Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is mount Zion, on the sides of the north, the city of the great King", is therefore misunderstood by Martin. It clearly does not mean that the Temple abutted the City of David. David understood that Mount Zion, where the Temple was going to be built, will be located in the place where he had build the altar, to the north of the City of David. The word for "situation" in Psalm 48 actually means "elevation" as the Hebrew verb "nof" means "to lift up", indicating that the Temple site was located in an elevated position in relation to the City of David. Later on the name of Zion became a symbol of God's chosen people (see for example Isa. 62). The word 'Zion' in Hebrew means a 'sign' and cannot therefore be a static location."

Comment by Ernest L. Martin:

In a previous comment Ritmeyer said the angel stood "outside Zion" in order to destroy the city. If "Zion" is NOT a static location, why does Ritmeyer earlier say that it was? Of course the Temple was built on "an elevated" area. I have stated several times in my answers given above to Ritmeyer that the Temple was built by Solomon on the elevated Ophel Mound that was situated above the Gihon Spring.

Continuing the Critique of Ritmeyer:

"To say that the quote from Ps. 87.7, "all my springs are in thee", means that Solomon's Temple was built over a spring is nonsense as the Hebrew for "springs" can also mean "eyes". This verse means that God's eyes are always on Zion, which in this Psalm means the City of God (vs.3), and not the Temple only. In this context Martin compares this to the spring in the future Temple, but conveniently forgets to mention that the waters will flow out through the Mount of Olives, after it is split, towards the Dead Sea (Zec. 14.4, 8). This shows actually that the Temple will be located opposite the Mount of Olives and not in the lower City of David. The quote from Ps. 116, "in the midst [center] of thee, O Jerusalem", does not mean that the Temple was located in the centre of Jerusalem, but merely inside it. The Hebrew for "in the midst", "be-tavech", is usually translated as "among" when referring to people or "in the midst", meaning within, when referring to places like a garden, a city or the sea. In the English Bible it has never once been translated as "centre".

Comment by Ernest L. Martin:

In every modern version I have checked (including the most prestigious), the translators have rendered the Hebrew word in Psalm 87:7 just as I have it. It is "springs" or "fountains," and *NEVER* translated "eyes" as Ritmeyer struggles to guess. After all, I have two eyewitness accounts that the Temple did have in its precincts the *springs* of

the Gihon that issue from a single source. Also, the Mount of Olives was reckoned as an elongated mountain stretching from Scopus in the north, through the central region opposite the Haram, and including the "Corruption" spur on the south that was opposite the Temple and the City of David. That no English language Bible ever translates the word "midst" as being "center" (as I suggest), I gave reference in my abridgment to Ezekiel 37:26 & 28; also Ezekiel 48:10,15,21 where the Catholic New American Version in English correctly translates the Hebrew word as "center."

Continuing the Critique of Ritmeyer:

"Jesus indeed said that not one stone shall be left upon another and I believe that that was fulfilled in 70 A.D. However, Jesus did not speak of "the Temple and its supporting walls", as Martin wants to make us believe, but only of the Temple itself (Luke 21.5) and those "buildings of the Temple" which the disciples pointed out to him (Matt. 24.1). The disciples spoke of the buildings which stood on the Temple Mount, but not of the foundation platform, the walls of which are still standing up today. If Martin wants to quote from the Scriptures, he should first read them more accurately [sic]."

Comment by Ernest L. Martin:

My dear Ritmeyer, you are the one who should be reading the texts accurately. As I abundantly explained (and it can be readily seen in the New Testament documents) that the disciples did NOT even refer Christ to the stones of the Temple UNTIL they were ALL OUTSIDE the Temple walls. When they pointed to the Temple, they were certainly INCLUDING its walls. Indeed, I give references in my book from Josephus that clearly state that NO WALLS of any kind were left in Jewish Jerusalem. Everything was torn down, including the very foundations of the city buildings and the Temple and its walls.

Continuing the Critique of Ritmeyer:

"The same careless treatment is reserved for the writings of Josephus. He indeed refers to a Temple Mount, which once was a square having sides of one stadium each. The quotes are from Ant. 8.96 and 15.398,400 and refer to the precinct built by Solomon. However, in War 5.184,185 he writes, "In course of ages, however, through the constant additions of the people to the embankment, the hill-top by this process of levelling up was widened". Josephus then says that the original square design was enlarged on three sides until it became double the original size (War 1.401). This, however, is ignored by Martin. The Mishnah (Middot 2.1) also states that the Temple Mount was square with sides of 500 cubits, which is a more accurate measurement than the stadium of Josephus, who appears to have given a rough estimate only. The archaeological remains of this early platform have been discovered by this reviewer. To say that the Temple Mount remained a small square platform shows an unfamiliarity with the historical sources."

Comment by Ernest L. Martin:

Ritmeyer says I give "careless treatment" to the writings of Josephus. In no way is this true. In fact, it is Ritmeyer who recklessly changes the text of Josephus along with Bible information itself which states in no uncertain terms that Solomon's Temple was in the form of a long rectangle, NOT a precise square. This rectangular shape was continued until the time of Alexander the Great when Josephus said the dimensions of the Temple were 150 feet wide and 500 feet long (Josephus, *Contra Apion* I.22). Since Ritmeyer says my statement that the Temple of Herod was a square of 600 feet "shows an unfamiliarity with the historical sources," I am tempted to quote the whole section of Josephus which shows that it is actually Ritmeyer who is "totally unfamiliar" with what Josephus stated. Ritmeyer should read *War* VI.5,4 or para. 310 to 315.

The fact is, the additions to the Temple Mount that Ritmeyer refers to above were accomplished after the time of Alexander the Great. The Temple Mount only became a precise square of 600 feet on each side in the time of Herod. Indeed, Josephus said that when the two colonnade roadways that led from Fort Antonia to the Temple were cut down, the Temple then became a precise square. He said that a prophecy (probably referring to Daniel) stated that such a condition would become evident with the Temple. The Jews in fact believed (according to Josephus) that once the Temple became a precise square (as it did just before its destruction by the Romans), this is when the obscure prophecy that Josephus refers to took place. Please Dr. Ritmeyer, read *War* VI.5,4 or para.310 to 315. By Ritmeyer not knowing these fundamental facts that everyone I have ever talked to on the essential parts of Josephus have all acknowledged makes me wonder if Ritmeyer has ever read Josephus.

Continuing the Critique of Ritmeyer:

"According to Martin's interpretation of some sources, Jews did not begin to pray at the Western (Wailing) Wall until the end of the 16th Century [sic] A.D. The writings of the Pilgrim of Bordeaux, which date from 333 A.D. clearly indicate that prayers were said there at the time: "The Jews come there [the ruins of the temple] once a year, weeping and wailing near a stone which survived the destruction of the Temple". There remained more than just a stone, because a Byzantine inscription dating from 363 A.D has been found near Robinson's Arch, quoting Isa. 66.14. This shows beyond any doubt that the Western Wall of the Temple Mount was still standing up and that it was an important place for the Jewish population of Jerusalem already in the Byzantine period. I'm sure that the Byzantine Jews had no interest in rebuilding the walls of a Roman camp, but those of the Temple only."

Comment by Ernest L. Martin:

Ritmeyer is also way off base on all these issues. I showed clearly in my research that the Bordeaux Pilgrim first went to a ruined Temple (that had just been built in the time of Constantine) that was located OUTSIDE the walls of Jerusalem and there he saw a stone outcropping with an incision or a cave in it. The spot was plainly over the Gihon Spring where this occurred. From there, the Pilgrim then went up the west hill and he finally entered a gate of Jerusalem (the only gate he entered) that led directly northward toward the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. When the Pilgrim got opposite the Church of the Holy Sepulchre (then being built), he looked eastward and saw a building that he

said had "walls" (he used the plural "walls") that reached down into the Tyropoeon Valley. The only building with such walls (that is, the western and southern walls) being in the bottom of the Tyropoeon was the Haram esh-Sharif (which was, by the way, directly east of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre just as the Bordeaux Pilgrim described). The Pilgrim then identified the walled facility as the "Praetorium" where Pilate judged Jesus. The word "Praetorium" was often synonymous in meaning to a fort or an encampment (i.e. Fort Antonia).

Later, in the time of the Piacensa Pilgrim from Italy (sixth century) this "Praetorium" had a singular feature that was honored by the Christians. It was an "oblong Rock" on which Jesus stood when he was judged by Pilate. The footprints of Jesus were supposed to have been found in that Rock. A major Church called the Church of the Holy Wisdom had been built over the "oblong Rock" and remained there until the Persians destroyed the church in 614 A.D.

Then in 692 A.D., the Sixth Caliph, Abn el-Malik, built the Dome of the Rock over this "oblong Rock." As late as the time of Saladin in the period of the Crusades, the court recorder of Saladin wrote that that "Rock" under the Dome of the Rock was the same "Rock" that always had the footprints of Jesus embedded on it that were left there when Pilate judged Jesus in the Praetorium (or, Fort Antonia). So, as late as the Crusades, it was known that the "Rock" under the Dome of the Rock was the *lithostrotos* (the structured Rock) mentioned in the Gospel of John (19:13) where Jesus stood at his judgment by Pilate. This evidence proves positively that throughout all the historical periods up to the Crusades it was recognized that the Dome of the Rock area in the Haram esh-Sharif was indeed the site of Fort Antonia, and NOT the Temple.

Continuing the Critique of Ritmeyer:

"I have not read the full account of Martin's deliberations, nor would I wish to do so, for the many inaccuracies in the abridged version make it abundantly clear that this theory is flawed, because it does not interpret the historical sources correctly and ignores all the archaeological evidence that has been excavated in Jerusalem. Martin claims to have worked for many years with Prof. Benjamin Mazar. Although I was the dig's architect since 1973 and continued to work with Mazar for a long time afterwards, I do not remember meeting Martin or Mazar ever mentioning him. To say that the present walls of the Temple Mount belong to the Antonia is to do an injustice, to say the least, to Mazar and all who worked with him for 10 long years. The excavation results have shown abundantly that these walls with their surviving gates belong to the Herodian Temple Mount and that the extant remains are those described in the historical records. If the Temple Mount was merely a Roman camp, why were Hebrew inscriptions, such as Isa. 66.14, that of the Trumpeting Stone and of the Korban (sacrifice) vessel was found in Herodian strata, together with so many Jewish coins? Why are the beautiful domes of the Double Gate passageway decorated with botanic and geometric designs in accordance with the Mosaic prohibition of portraying humans and animals, which was so prevalent in the Roman architectural world? I could go on asking many more such questions to which there are no answers if Martin was right."

Comment by Ernest L. Martin:

Poor Ritmeyer! He not only wishes to remain blind to the truth of my research but he stubbornly refuses even to read my major proofs which I provide in my book of 550 pages. He wishes to keep his head firmly anchored in the sand of ignorance. That is his privilege, yet it is a very unwise and fallacious attitude to take. He even questions my statement that I worked personally with Professor Benjamin Mazar at the excavation in Jerusalem. Really, it is Ritmeyer who is the latest on the totem pole. I was the one who introduced my Chancellor of Ambassador College (later University) to involve ourselves with Hebrew University and Professor Mazar in 1968. For five years (from 1969 to 1973) I was responsible as an executive administrator for over 450 college students who dug at the excavation under Professor Mazar. I was the initial person responsible for sending over two million dollars to Professor Mazar and the State of Israel to fund the dig and other enterprises during those years. Indeed, it was I who never heard of Ritmeyer because the architectural offices were later moved from the central excavation site and I had no need to go there in my administrative capacity as the senior person in charge of all Ambassador activities at the dig. It was Ritmeyer who was the "Johnny come lately" in 1973 (the last year I was executive administrator).

Ritmeyer says that my new research does an injustice to Professor Mazar because of the radical interpretations that are not in accord with mainstream opinions on the site of the Temple. The fact is, I knew Benjamin very well. He was a first class gentleman and scholar who put truth and honesty above everything. He would have been proud of my new research, and I firmly believe he would be at the forefront of accepting it if he were still alive. My research is not a dishonor to Professor Mazar, indeed it is an honor because it was Professor Mazar who encouraged me to continue in my research of all subjects connected with the City of Jerusalem and he actively praised my work on several other subjects before my newest research on the Temple site was published.

Continuing the Critique of Ritmeyer:

"I have made many reconstruction drawings of archaeological sites in Jerusalem. These were based first of all on the archaeological evidence, both in situ and found on the site, on architectural parallels and on the historical accounts. Whenever possible I consulted with the archaeologists who had excavated the particular site and was always very careful not to give a free hand to the imagination, as I know the power of reconstruction drawings. The one, however, published by Martin has no credence whatsoever, as it is not based on any archaeological evidence. It cannot therefore be called an archaeological reconstruction, but is merely the result of flawed interpretation of the historical sources and a lot of wishful thinking."

Comment by Ernest L. Martin:

The historical and biblical research I am offering to the world is based on the eyewitness accounts of many people. There can be no doubt that I am right in my conclusions and I will counter effectively any alternative view that supports the present erroneous teaching that the Haram esh-Sharif is the site of the Temples of God in Jerusalem. It is the archaeological evidence that has been misjudged by Ritmeyer and other scholars that is flawed and a lot of wishful thinking. I have not the slightest doubt that my conclusions will be (in the main) accepted by the scholarly world. This will be done simply because they are true.

Continuing the Critique of Ritmeyer:

"Jan Simons, wrote in his scholarly work , "It has been said that all authors on ancient Jerusalem, though disagreeing among themselves about every aspect of their subject, are so much at one about a single point that they usually do not even trouble to prove it, viz., the fact that the temple of Solomon and Herod stood on the same middle part of the eastern ridge which is now occupied by Haram esh-Sharif. Indeed, a demonstration of this localization formulated in such general terms might be dispensed with because, at any rate to my knowledge, nobody has ever ventured to suggest another place for it". Martin's ideas fall therefore outside the scope of main stream scholarship regarding the Temple Mount."

Final Comment by Ernest L. Martin:

Ritmeyer is correct in one of his judgments. No one in modern times has suggested that the Temples of God were all located over the Gihon Spring. All scholars and historians since the time of the Crusades (for the past 600 years) and no matter who they are or of what religious persuasion they proclaim, have held steadfastly and religiously to the belief that the Temples were located within the precincts of the Haram esh-Sharif. What I have done with my research is to prove otherwise. And folks, there is not the slightest doubt that I am right. All I can say, in closing, is that the truth will triumph, and triumph soon. When the truth is finally accepted, it will help all parties in the Middle East (and especially those in Jerusalem) to put down their guns and rocks and to turn them into plowshares and into monuments of peace. I hope that day may soon emerge.

Jerusalem and the Temple after the Roman Destruction

Describing its history from the Roman destruction to the present Smith's Bible Dictionary has this to say about the history of Jerusalem from that time up to the present:

The greatest siege that it sustained, however, was at the hands of the Romans under Titus, when it held out nearly five months, and when the town was completely destroyed, **A.D. 70**. Hadrian restored it as a Roman colony, **A.D. 135**, and among other buildings erected a temple of Jupiter Capitolinus on the site of the temple. He gave to it the name of *Ælia Capitolina*, thus combining his own family name with that of the Capitoline Jupiter. The emperor Constantine established the Christian character by the erection of a church on the supposed site of the holy sepulchre, **A.D. 332**. It was taken by the Persians under Chosroes II in **A.D. 614**. The dominion of the Christians in the holy city was now rapidly drawing to a close.

In **A.D. 637** the patriarch Sophronius surrendered to the khalif Omar in person. With the fall of the Abassides the holy city passed into the hands of the Fatimite dynasty, under whom the sufferings of the Christians in Jerusalem reached their height. About the year **1084** it was bestowed upon Ortok, chief of a Turkman horde. It was taken by the Crusaders in **1099**, and for eighty-eight years Jerusalem remained in the hands of the Christians. In **1187** it was retaken by Saladin after a siege of several weeks. In **1277** Jerusalem was nominally annexed to the kingdom of Sicily. In **1517** it passed under the sway of the Ottoman sultan Selim I, whose successor Suliman built the present walls of the city in **1542**. Mohammed Aly, the pasha of Egypt, took

possession of it in **1832**; and in **1840**, after the bombardment of Acre, it was again restored to the sultan.

The present number of inhabitants in [the old walled city of] Jerusalem is variously estimated. Probably Pierotti's estimate is very near the truth—20,330; of whom 5068 are Christians, 7556 Mohammedans (Arabs and Turks), and 7706 Jews (**Article – Jerusalem**).

Ernest Martin writes the following about the utter destruction of many of the great buildings within Jewish Jerusalem at the hands of the Romans in **70 AD**:

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."

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." 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. 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 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." 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...

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.

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...

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 (**Temples, p.164-167**).

Notice now some quotes of eyewitnesses to the utter destruction of the Temple and Jerusalem. Speaking of the Temple 15 years after its destruction a man named Barnabas wrote:

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 (**Barnabas 16:4-5 - Temples p.172**).

Justin Martyr, a Samaritan Christian from Palestine, in the middle of the second century 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 (**Dialogue with Trypho, chapter 25 – Temples p.174**).

Jerome in the late fourth century said the following about the destruction of the city:

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] (**Quoted by Moshe Gil, A History of Palestine 634-1099, p.67 – Temples p.175**).



Notice two things about what Jerome tells us here. Both he and Justin Martyr in the previous quote tell us that the Temple was burned with fire. Apart from the small amount on the very southern wall at its base there is next to no evidence whatsoever of fire damage to the walls or the platform of the Haram where the Temple supposedly stood!

Secondly, we are told that Hadrian had the site of the Temple turned into a dump for his new city he called Aelia to the NW of the earlier city of Jerusalem. Why would you turn a site with four strong walls to protect it into a dump if that was the Temple site?

Ernest Martin makes these comments about what Jerome wrote:

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 [where many cisterns were built]. 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, the Haram. esh-Sharif was not a part of Jewish Jerusalem in the time of Herod and Jesus (**Temples p.175-176**).

Hippolytus around **225 AD** wrote the following:

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 (**Works, Part II.30, Ante-Nicene Fathers - Temples p.177**).

Hippolytus also tells us that the Temple was burned with fire and he also tells us that the walls of the Temple were cast down.

The most famous early church historian was Eusebius, the christian archbishop of Caesarea on the coast of Israel. He lived at the time of the Roman emperor Constantine in the early fourth century. Eusebius' in his "Proof of the Gospel" describes the Temple as it was in his day. Notice what Eusebius tells us:

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."

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, 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 stone quarry. 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 stones 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...

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 man-made 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] **(Proof of the Gospel, Book VIII, Ch.3, sect.405-406, Book VI, Ch.7, sect.265 – Temples p.180, 189).**

Here we have a plain reference to the Temple site at this time being used as farmland! The Haram has had a stone platform from the time of Christ and therefore could not be the site Eusebius refers to as the Temple site! Not only that, God Himself prophesied that the Temple site would be BARE and plowed like a field in Micah 3:12.



Therefore because of you Zion shall be **plowed like a field**. Jerusalem shall become heaps of ruins and **the mountain of the temple like the bare hills of the forest.**

There were heaps of loose stones from its destruction that in time were used for rebuilding Aelia. After most were taken away the site was bare. Part of the site had become farmland and part of the area became a dump. Regarding the stones used for the construction for Aelia Ernest Martin makes the following comments:

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. (**Temples p.185**).

Eusebius also wrote:

Their ancient holy place, at any rate, and their Temple **are to this day as much destroyed as Sodom (Proof of the Gospel, Book V, Ch.23, sect.250, – Temples p.188)**.

About this comment by Eusebius Ernest Martin writes:

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 outer walls was not a part of the former Temple, and Eusebius knew it...

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 Temple and walls underwent (**Temples p.188-190**).

Continuing on Ernest Martin tells us more about the state of the Temple site after the Roman destruction:

"[Eusebius said that had the nation repented] the stately beauty of their very Temple **would not have become sand and thorns**" (**Proof of the Gospel, Book VII, Ch.1, sect.327**).

"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...

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" (Gregory of Nyssa, Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, s.2, vol 5.29).

But wait a minute! Without doubt, Titus allowed the more than 10,000 stones of the four walls to remain in their original glory in their lower courses...occupying a huge area that the Rose Bowl in Pasadena, California or four Coliseums in Rome could comfortably fit within. [It] cannot be the walls and stones of the Temple that the eyewitnesses describe as thoroughly ruined and devastated beyond recognition...

From 70 C.E. to 370 C.E., there was only one ancient eyewitness who referred to the walls of the Harem 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...

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)...

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 to 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...

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 (**Temples, p.190, 193-194, 196, 79-81**).

After Constantine built the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in the west of Jerusalem it became commonplace to speak of the site as the New Jerusalem or the Temple of God and the SW hill to the south of the church as Mount Zion. Prior to this, however the City of David on the SE spur where the Temple stood was identified as Mount Zion. Writes Ernest Martin about this:

A hundred years before Eusebius, the great scholar Origen went to Jerusalem and viewed the region. In his writings he always identified "Sion" with the Temple mount and not the southwest hill (In John IV.19,20; and see ISBE (1929), Vol.V, p.3151)...

But from the time of Constantine onward, it became common to transfer Sion from its actual location in the eastern side of the city to the southwest hill, and in Jerome's translation of Eusebius' Onomasticon (one of the latest works of Eusebius, and added to and "brought up to date" by Jerome), Jerome apparently allows for the new interpretation to satisfy the beliefs of people about a hundred years after Eusebius (Palestine Pilgrim Text, V61.1, pp.60-62). This only occurred, however, when the Venus Shrine became the New Jerusalem after A.D.325. From then on, it became quite acceptable for Christians to call the southwest hill "Sion." (**Golgotha, p.178-179**).

The Jewish Attempts at Rebuilding the Temple in the Fourth Century

There was a great persecution and dispersion of the Jews in the first and second centuries AD. Even though most Jews were dispersed from Palestine a remnant continued to dwell in Palestine and Jerusalem in the centuries to follow.

After the complete destruction to the Temple caused by Titus in **70 AD** there were two Jewish attempts to rebuild the Temple. The first one occurred in the time of Constantine - 12 years of building from the Edict of Milan in **312 AD** to the defeat of the eastern emperor Licinius defeat in **324 AD**. Construction came to a halt when Constantine became very anti-Jewish in his dealings and put a stop to the construction.

The second attempt to rebuild the Temple was around 37 years later in the time of Julian the Apostate. An earthquake played a major part in halting the construction followed by a change of emperor who stopped it.

The ruins continued at the site built over the Gihon Spring for several centuries including the "Western Wall" of the Holy of Holies from the Constantine/Julian Temple. This "Western Wall" has nothing to do with the present "Wailing Wall" of Herod's Fort Antonia that the Jews have adorned for the past 430 years.

In **313 AD** the Roman empire was divided in two – the western and eastern Roman Empire. Constantine Augustus ruled the western empire and Licinius Augustus ruled the eastern empire. They met in Milan to discuss empire affairs.

Maximinus Daia in his response to the Edict of Milan in **313 AD** wrote:

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" (**Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History, IX, x, 7-11 – Temples p.205**).

Christians saw this as an indication that new churches could once again be constructed and it was common at the time to call churches "Lord's Houses." Jews however perceived it differently and saw such permission as allowing them to rebuild the "House of the Lord" that was the Temple so, from **313 to 324 AD** Jewish authorities started building a new Temple in Jerusalem.

Licinius was succeeded in the east by Constantine in **324 AD** when Constantine defeated him and became the sole ruler of the Roman Empire. Ernest Martin describes what happened after that this way:

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."

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" (**Eusebius, Life of Constantine, II. 55**).

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 built or re-built, but that the Jews, as an "eastern people," could rebuild their Temple at Jerusalem.

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 Nicea 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."

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 Testament 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. The narrative makes sense in every way and there is no reason for denying its veracity...

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**"...

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 (**Temples, p.206-208**).

The Bordeaux Pilgrim who visited Jerusalem in **333 AD** shows a number of buildings still standing on the Temple Mount, including the almost finished Temple. He wrote:

"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" (Temples p.209).

Cyril, a christian Archbishop in **344 AD**, mentioned the state of this new Temple while speaking at the Holy Sepulchre Church. Writes Ernest Martin:

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 [future tense] not be left one stone upon another in the Temple of the Jews**, according to the doom pronounced by our Savior; for **when [future tense], 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" (**Temples p.210**).

Since we have already established that the prophecies were completely fulfilled when the Romans destroyed the Temple digging it up to its very foundations we can deduce therefore that he is speaking of another Temple with his use of the term "new buildings". The prophecies were fulfilled and Cyril predicted they would be fulfilled another time so Christ's words would become valid yet again.

Another attempt was made to rebuild the Temple in the days of the emperor Julian who gave his permission allowing the Jews to rebuild it. Of this second attempt at rebuilding the Temple Ernest Martin writes:

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 stones and other artifacts already in the area to fashion a new Temple with its subsidiary buildings...

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. Rutinus, also in the early fifth century, recorded that the Jews began their building activities thinking that Messiah was arriving or already had arrived.

Socrates mentioned that the Jewish workers quickly obtained lime and cement and that they began to destroy the old foundations. The records show that the 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.

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"...

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...

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...an equestrian statue of Hadrian...stands in the place of the Holy of Holies [the inner sanctum of the Temple of God] to this very day" (**Temples, p.211-213, 215-217**).

Byzantine Churches on the Temple Mount

In the time of Justinian in the sixth century AD there were two Byzantine churches built on the Haram – the larger Church of Mary (the Nea Church) built where the Al Aqsa mosque stands today and the Church of the Holy Wisdom built where the Dome of the Rock is today. Both churches were destroyed during the conquest by the Persians in **614 AD** who were later defeated in **637 AD** by the Arabs.

Ernest Martin writes the following about these Byzantine churches that were built on the Haram during the rule of Justinian:

Many prominent scholars and archaeologists up to 1977 noticed that Arabic historical sources had identified the Church of Mary with the spot where Omar built the Al Aqsa Mosque (that is, at the southern end of the Haram esh-Sharif). Before 1977, it was generally accepted that this identification was correct. But in that year, Professor Avigad while digging in the valley area southwest of the Haram esh-Sharif found the remains of a foundational area near the top of an associated cistern. The inscription stated that the building was constructed by the orders of Justinian. Professor Avigad almost immediately began to think that he had found the Church of Mary (the Nea Church)...They at once began to call it the Nea Church. But in NO WAY is this identification proper. Their judgement was too hasty. There are historical facts that disprove Professor Avigad and his colleagues.

When one reads all of the account of Procopius...it will be found that Justinian renovated or built at least seven other major buildings in Jerusalem within his long life

and rule (born **483** and ruled from **527 to 565 C.E.**). Prof. Avigad should not have been so hasty in his enthusiasm to identify his building with the Nea Church, since Justinian built seven other like buildings in Jerusalem...

Even more devastating to Professor Avigad's theory, the inscription (besides saying the building was sponsored by Justinian's generosity) stated that the religious leader in charge of construction was: "the Most Holy Constantinus, Priest and Hegumen," whereas for the special construction of the Church of Mary (the Nea Church) we have the precise statement of Procopius that "the Emperor sent an architect named Theodore who was supervised by the Bishop of Bacatha named Barachos"...But there is more...

The precise location of the Nea Church is well described. Procopius said: "But this church alone stands in a different position; for the Emperor Justinian ordered it to be built upon the highest of the hills"...Now, the side building in which Professor Avigad found the Justinian inscription was just west of the Tyropoeon Valley and slightly upslope. It was NOT on "the highest hill"...The "highest of the hills" in Jerusalem at that time was the Haram esh-Sharif...

Justinian had given his architects some enormous proportions for the length and breath of the church and its accompanying buildings. It was to be so grand and large that it was to be "a church in honour of the Virgin, to which no other can be compared" (first line of Procopius' description). So large was the church to be that "the hill was not of sufficient size to enable the work to be carried out"...

Procopius continues: "But a fourth part of the church, that toward the south wind and the rising sun, in which the priests perform the sacred mysteries, was left with no ground upon which to rest"... Interestingly, this is precisely what one observes at the extreme south of the Haram esh-Sharif and in its southeastern portion where the vaulted area called "Solomon's Stables" are found...

We now come to an important phase of Procopius' description because he states the Emperor had to make a major addition to the hill at it then existed. The Emperor did something that was not in the original hill. Note this important addition: **"The Emperor has added an other portion to the original hill."**

Since the original Haram area was surrounded by four walls that were almost in the shape of a rectangle, the Emperor "added another portion to the original hill." To do this he would have had to enlarge the walled area. And this is apparently what he did in the south (and a portion in the east and a small part in the west). Let us look at this "addition."

The Haram was not large enough in its southern portions to satisfy the gigantic measurements of the Church of Mary (the Nea Church) as Justinian intended. So, the builders began to construct a brand new mountain within the Haram enclosure (south and east) alongside the former high area to the north.

In elevating this new area, the builders were **"being forced to raise a building equal in size to a mountain."** Indeed, they elevated the whole of the southern area of the Haram to become level with the highest elevation in the north. To do this "they cut blocks of stone of enormous size out of the mountains." This was to make this new "elevated mountain" in the south...



From what is called the "Seam" in the east wall (Kenyon said the "Seam" was a little over 107 feet north of the southeast angle) Justinian appears to have built a southern extension and made a new southeastern angle...

From there his architects built a new part of the western wall about 107+ feet north to intersect with the former southwestern angle. If this is true, and it appears as though this is what Procopius is stating, then Robinson's Arch and its stairways were a creation of Justinian and not a part of the original wall build by Herod...

The Piacenza Pilgrim...said (just after its construction) that there was in Jerusalem the Church of Mary "with its great congregation of monks, and its guest houses for men and women. In catering for travelers they have a vast number of tables, and more than 3000 beds for the sick." Procopius also mentioned these complex of buildings that were part of the Nea Church. He said: "While on either side of the other road [next to the Nea Church] are two hospices — the work of the Emperor Justinian — one of which is destined for the reception of strangers [travelers], while the other is an infirmary for the sick poor"...

According to Professor Hagi Amitzur of Bar Ilan University in Israel, Justinian had a specific wish not only to equal Solomon as one noted for his architectural accomplishments, but Justinian had an intense desire to surpass Solomon. He loved being compared to King Solomon...Amizur translates Procopius as: "And in Jerusalem he dedicated...a shrine [that is, a Temple, emphasis mine] to which no other can be compared.) In short (and Amitzur argues his case convincingly), Justinian wanted his Nea Church to be called "a shrine" or "a Temple." No wonder he wanted it to be the most grand building in the world, and in the capital city of his religion. At the dedication of the Hagia Sophia in Istanbul in **537 C.E.**, his dedicatory words show something in the character of Justinian that pleased him beyond compare. He stated in conclusion (as Prof. Amitzur relates): "Solomon, I vanquished thee."



Justinian wanted people to look on him as the new "Solomon," and even superior to Solomon. So, as Amitzur argues effectively, the Nea Church became known as Justinian's "shrine" or "Temple" and the people looked on its construction as the rebuilding of "Solomon's Temple." Indeed, Amitzur makes the wise observation that Procopius' description of two important columns on the east side of the "shrine" were depicting the Jachin and Boaz (**1 Kings 7:21**) that were prominent in Solomon's Temple...It was easy for Christians to continue this identification to the time of the Crusades when it was dogmatically believed that the building in the Haram taken over by the Knights' Templar was indeed in their view, "Solomon's Temple." It was truly "Solomon's Temple," but the "Solomon" was Justinian.

There is more to suggest this conclusion. When the Piacenza Pilgrim in Justinian's time described the Church of the Holy Wisdom as being the Praetorium where Christ's footprints were found in the "oblong rock" (now under the Dome of the Rock),

he then made the further comment that the Church stood "in front of the Temple of Solomon." In going southward from the Church of the Holy Wisdom, the first edifice that would be encountered was the "Church of Mary" (the Nea Church) but it was also reckoned to be a "Shrine" ("Temple") and that "Solomon" (that is, the new "Solomon" otherwise known as the Emperor Justinian) had built it...

Look at what Arabic historians of later times believed and many of our own modern scholars of early Arabic times. For example, the outstanding scholar of Arabic history, Prof. Guy Le Strange in his "Palestine Under the Moslems" gives an exact quote from the Arabic historian Shams ad Din Suyuti (**1470 C.E.** who was himself referring to earlier Arabic histories) stated that the spot where Omar selected for his Al Aqsa Mosque was certainly the precise area where the Church of Saint Mary (the Nea Church) stood, and it was Justinian (that is, "Solomon") who built it. Notice what Suyuti wrote:

"Now, when Omar made the capitulation with the people of the Holy City [Jerusalem], and entered among them, he was wearing at that time two long tunics of the kind called Sumbulant. Then he prayed IN THE CHURCH OF MARY, and when he had done so, he spat on one of his tunics. And it was said to him: 'Dost thou spit here because that this is a place in which the sin of polytheism has been committed?' And Omar answered: 'Yes, verily the sin of polytheism hath been committed herein; but now, in truth, the name of Allah hath been pronounced here'..."

Conder consistently referred to Al Aqsa Mosque as built on the ruins of the Nea Church without the any doubt in its identity. Clearly, before **614 C.E.**, all the Haram esh-Sharif was Christian. This means that in the sixth century there were two major Christian churches standing within the walls of the Haram esh-Sharif. One was in the central and north part called the Church of the Holy Wisdom over the area of the later Dome of the Rock, and the other dominated the southern part (and even with the southern wall extended 107+ feet south to accommodate it) called the Church of Mary (Nea Church) situated over the southern fourth of the enclosure (**Major Keys in Discovering the Lost Temples of Jerusalem, www.askelm.com/temple/t011112.htm**).

How the Al Aqsa Mosque and Dome of the Rock came to be Built

The site where the Dome of the Rock now stands was **an important Christian holy site** long before it ever became a regarded as a holy site to Muslims and later to Jews when they later lost site of where the true site of the Temple was.

Let's now pick up the story of the true significance of the Dome of the Rock to early christians and how the Al Aqsa mosque and the Dome of the Rock came to be built. Writes Ernest Martin:

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...

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...

This church [The Church of the Holy Wisdom] 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 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 are still on it. He had a wellshaped foot, small and delicate."

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...

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 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...

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.' 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 tread on that "Christian Rock," this made the Caliph suspect Ka'ab of being a clandestine Christian...

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...

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...

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 Hararn esh-Sharif which was also 10 degrees north of east...

Virtually all early Jewish traditions 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...

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 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...

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...

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"...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 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.

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.

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...

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 and to the Christian community in Jerusalem.

[Note carefully Omar agreed to only build one mosque in Jerusalem. This, as all historians know, was the Al Aqsa mosque NOT the Dome of the Rock built 50 years later. For 50 years the Dome of the Rock area and its famous rock had no significance at all to Muslims!]

When Omar signed the agreement, Sophronius then took Omar and his associates to the place where the Jews believed the Temple site was. This was at the city dump located in the lower city of Jerusalem on the southeast hill just at the edge of the Kidron Valley...

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.

"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 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 Jacob [Jewish tradition states the stone of Jacob was small and portable NOT a large outcrop of rock like that in the Dome of the Rock] 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. But on this condition, that 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 [Rum], 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."

“So 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.' 'No,' Omar responded. **'We will build a sanctuary and place the stone at the end of the sanctuary.'** Therefore Omar built a sanctuary' and put the stone at the end of it.

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"...

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.

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 the Dome of the Rock...

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 Kidron 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 Kidron 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...

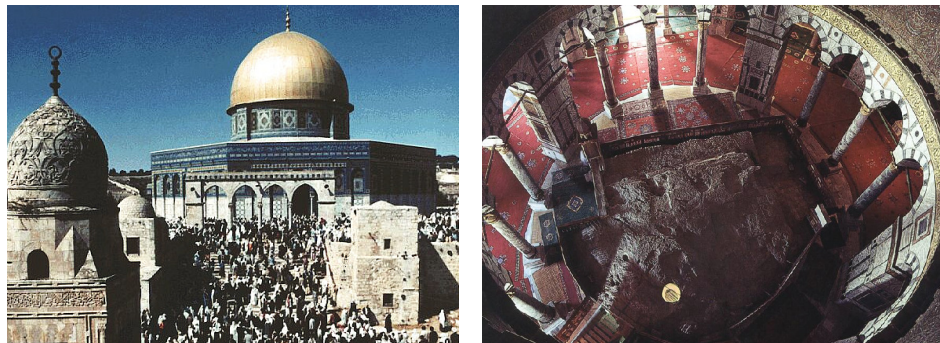
Omar then concentrated his whole attention to the area of the Haram esh-Sharif adjacent to the southern wall, which is now the southern wall of the Al Aqsa Mosque. This southern region abutting to the south wall of the Haram was remarkable to Omar. It appeared like the area shown him in his original 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...

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"...

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 [in **692 AD** fifty years after Omar built the Al Aqsa mosque] 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 [see Ernest Martin's article "**The Secret Key to the Dome of the Rock**" at <http://askelm.com/temple/t991001.htm>]. 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...(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 (**Temples, p.85-86, 89, 95-96, 94-95, 114-129, 134, 138**).

Jews Repopulate the Original City of David

Following the Byzantine empire was the Arab empire under the banner of the new religion of Islam. In the seventh century the city of Jerusalem was ruled by the second Muslim Caliph Omar.

Omar was already beginning to build his Al Aqsa mosque at the southern end of the Haram. He also built two palatial buildings close to the southern wall of the Haram that occupied a great deal of space south of the southern Haram wall. These Umayyad palaces were discovered during the archaeological excavations conducted under the direction of Professor Benjamin Mazar when Ernest Martin and Ambassador students were involved on the site.

In a letter discovered in the Geniza library of Egypt we read of the request by Jews to Omar to move from Tiberias to Jerusalem. It states:

"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 waters of Shiloah, which could be used for immersion.**

This was granted them [the 70 Jewish families] by the Emir of the Believers. So seventy households including women and children moved from Tiberias, and established settlements in buildings [then in ruins] whose foundations had stood for many generations" (**Hammer, Jerusalem Anthology, p.148 – Temples p.214**).

Notice that the Temple was in the southern part of the city near the pool of Siloam **at the very southern end of the original City of David**. When it speaks of the southern part of the city it could not be referring to where the Jewish quarter of the Old City is today near the Wailing Wall as they would have been separated from the Pool of Siloam by Omar's palaces.

It also says they wanted to be near the Temple and its **gates**. In Omar's time there were still some ruins of the aborted Temple, including gates, that was attempted to be built in the time of Constantine and Julian.

These seventy Jewish families wanted to establish themselves "in buildings whose foundations had stood for many generations" and they showed no interest in the "Rock" now under the Dome of the Rock. Notes Ernest Martin:

Their sole attention was to the area SOUTH of the Haram esh-Sharif and even further south from the Muslim government buildings that were built in the Umayyad period. Also, when the Karaite Jews a century after the time of Omar settled in Jerusalem, they also went to this same southern area which was the former site of the City of David on the southeast ridge as well as adjacently across the Kidron into the Silwan area. These first Jewish settlers certainly knew that the former Temple site was well SOUTH of the Haram esh-Sharif...

The Temple was actually near the "waters of Shiloah" (waters that flowed from the Gihon Spring). All the Jews within the early Arabic period knew that the Temples were located over the Gihon. Anyone who would have suggested any other area would have been laughed at by the Rabbis and by the generality of the Jewish people. The Jewish authorities were then aware the Temples were over the Gihon Spring (**Major Keys in Discovering the Lost Temples of Jerusalem, <http://askelm.com/temple/t011112.htm>**).

Major Events in the Eleventh Century that led to Jews leaving Jerusalem

A series of events occurred in the eleventh century that led to the abandonment of Jerusalem by the Jews for a period of 50 years. The first of these was a major earthquake that occurred in **1033** which devastated the wall protecting the southeastern region of the city.

Moshe Gil records the following about the earthquake of **1033 AD**:

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. (Temples, p. 238)**.

In **1067** after another major earthquake the pure waters of the Gihon Spring turned bitter and unpalatable for drinking. This had occurred once before in the time of Jeremiah (**Jeremiah 2:18-19**). Like it was in Jeremiah's time, this was taken as a sign of God's displeasure and the lack of clean water forced the Jews to re-evaluate where they should abide. Ernest Martin notes of the spiritual significance of the waters turning bitter:

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 heinous 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**) ...

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 (**Temples p.151-152, 151**).

Joshua Prawer in "The History of the Jews in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem" 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 remained (**The History of Jews in the Latin kingdom of Jerusalem, p.15 – Temples p.150**).

In **1071** Jerusalem was conquered by the Seljuk Turks and in **1077** the Jews moved the Jewish Academy to Tyre and then Damascus. Then, in **1099** the European Crusaders took control of Jerusalem and the Jews were persecuted even more. They lost all possessions in Jerusalem and were banned from entering Jerusalem for the next 50 years. Ernest Martin writes the following about their evacuation from Jerusalem:

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 (**Temples p.153**).

This was a turning point for the Jews which later led to them losing knowledge of the true geography of the original Zion and the true location of the Temple.

No Gentile Sites of Worship Ever on the True Temple Site

We have records from various Christian and Jewish authorities over the centuries such as Sophronius (**638**), Rabbi David Kimchi (**1235**) and Azariah De Rossi (**1577**) that all state that no Gentiles ever built any worship sites on the true site of where Solomon's Temple stood.

When Omar asked the Christian leader Sophronius to guide him through Jerusalem and help as he chose a location for his Al Aqsa mosque in **638 AD** Sophronius pointed out that the area of the Temple site had been the city dump from Roman times and had never been built upon by either the Romans or the Byzantines. 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 Archbishop Eutychius describing the account of Omar's meeting with Sophronius two centuries later in **876 C.E.** wrote the following about the Temple site showing that the Romans and the Byzantines never built a worship site over the true Temple site:

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 [Rum], 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. (Major Keys in Discovering the Lost Temples of Jerusalem, <http://askelm.com/temple/t011112.htm>).

In 1235 Rabbi David Kimchi wrote the following about the Temple in Jerusalem:

And [the Temple] **is still in ruins**, [in] that the Temple site **WAS NEVER BUILT ON BY THE NATIONS**. (Commentary on Isaiah 64:10 and quoted by Prof. Kaufman in Biblical Archaeology Review, March/April, 2000, p.61 - **Major Keys in Discovering the Lost Temples of Jerusalem**, <http://askelm.com/temple/t011112.htm>).

He explicitly said that no Gentile nation either Roman, Byzantine or Muslim had ever built on the true Temple site!

Notice, too, that he also said that it "is still (present tense) in ruins." This is long after the building of the Al Aqsa mosque and the Dome of the Rock. There has never been an ruins on the Haram since those mosques were built so Rabbi Kimchi must be referring to another location. He was referring to the ruins of the attempt at rebuilding the Temple in the time of Julian in the 4th century AD.

Another Middle Ages Jewish witness of the Temple was Rabbi Samuel Ben Samson. He speaks of the Temple situated at the spring of Etham. Ernest Martin writes:

In **1210 C.E.** there is a brief account by Rabbi Samuel Ben Samson that in Jerusalem was a place where "only the foundations [of the Temple] remain now in existence." It was near the "fount [spring] of Etham, the bathing place of the priests." This is a reference to the Gihon Spring which had been closed up by Saladin in **1187 C.E.** Rabbi Samson said that opposite the fount was a Gate in the Western Wall.

"At the base of this wall there is to be observed a kind of arch placed at the base of the Temple. It is by a subterranean passage that the priests reach the fount of Etham, the spot where the baths [of the priests] were."

The spring was then being named after a site called Etham. This spring was also reckoned as the miraculous "Well of Miriam" that appeared in various places and was once located in the time of Moses at the Tabernacle entrance.

Why did some Jews in the Crusade period call the Gihon Spring "the Fount of Etham"? This is easy to answer. Etham was an area south of Bethlehem that was once a water source for Jerusalem when conduits brought water to Jerusalem from the higher area of Etham. Many people thought that the water that came from the Gihon had its origin in the Etham area and thus the Gihon Spring in Jerusalem was sometimes called by that name (**Major Keys in Discovering the Lost Temples of Jerusalem**, <http://askelm.com/temple/t011112.htm>).

The third witness to the fact that no Gentiles ever built on the true site of the Temple was Azariah de' Rossi in his book "The Light of the Eyes" which was written in 1577. Ernest Martin writes the following about he had to say about the Temple site:

This is the testimony of a Jewish historian who was also aware in the year **1577 C.E.** that the site of the former Temples **WAS STILL NOT BUILT UPON** by the Romans, Byzantines, Muslims, Crusaders, Egyptians or Ottoman Turks. Other than the Jews themselves in the brief period in the fourth century in the time of Constantine and again in that of Julian (when two Temples were started by the Jews, but aborted), there had never been any buildings of consequence ever constructed on that

southeast ridge over the Gihon Spring. And now we come to the sixteenth century. Jewish authorities as late as **1577 C.E.** knew the Haram was not the Temple site...

De' Rossi...made two major observations about the original site of the Jerusalem — the Jerusalem of David and Herod and also the site of the Temple [Moriah] in the time of Herod. He said that in spite of the fact that the location of Jerusalem and the Temple had been moved northward since the time of Hadrian, there was still a reason for all Jews to take comfort and show their satisfaction that the original site of the Temples had not been disturbed at all by Hadrian's actions. Hadrian left that southeastern region where the Temples once stood alone and did not build on it.

As a result of this maneuver, De' Rossi stated: **"OUR HOLY SITE [MORIAH] HAS NOT BEEN TRANSFORMED INTO A HOUSE OF PRAYER FOR ANY OTHER PEOPLE"** (p.250). De' Rossi is acclaiming that NO HOUSE OF PRAYER for any other people had been built on the site of the former Temples. Indeed, De' Rossi went even further in his observation which he gave at his own time (**1577 C.E.**).

De' Rossi went on say (in the same context) that though the Jewish Rabbi Nachmanides 300 years before was willing to tear his garments when he first saw the modern Jerusalem of Hadrian and the Al Aqsa Mosque as being the location of Solomon's Temple and that the Dome of the Rock was acknowledged as the area for the new Holy of Holies (and this is where the Christians and Muslims were then placing them), De' Rossi insisted that Abarbanel in **1495 C.E.** knew this was not the true site. The original Jerusalem and Temple were not associated with the Haram esh-Sharif (which was further north).

Now note what De' Rossi concluded in his observation for his own generation. He said that "the original Jerusalem" was located in an area "in which, even in his own time [the time of Abarbanel], and nowadays [also in the time of De' Rossi] **NO ARAB WOULD PITCH HIS TENT**" (p.250). De' Rossi stated categorically that all Arabs were afraid to approach the original site of the Jewish Temples in **1577 C.E.** and that they would not so much as pitch a tent in the region. De' Rossi was certainly NOT TALKING ABOUT the Haram esh-Sharif in this context because that area was the central shrine and their religious site of gathering for the Muslims of which most of the Arabs belonged...

And even today, there is in the region only a smattering of secular and ramshackle dwellings that are of poor construction and it is the most undesirable place in modern Jerusalem for people to set up house (**Major Keys in Discovering the Lost Temples of Jerusalem**, <http://askelm.com/temple/t011112.htm>).

How the Jews came to believe the current "Temple Mount" was the site of the Temple

Jewish attention only began to be turned to the "Temple Mount" as the true site starting with Benjamin of Tudela in **1169** after the 50 year period when no Jew set foot inside of Jerusalem and they began to lose sight of the true geographical knowledge about Jerusalem.

At that time they thought they had discovered the tombs of David and the kings of Judah on the southwestern hill of Jerusalem and began to question the validity of the SE spur as the original City of David, not realizing that Simon the Hasmonean began a new and different Zion there similar to New York being a new city named after York in England and that Simon had moved the graves out of the old city to new graves.

In this so-called grave they found what they thought were the remains of a synagogue with a niche that was pointed towards the Haram el-Sharif and the Dome of the Rock. Since Jewish tradition stated that early synagogues were pointed toward the Temple it was surmised that

the Dome of the Rock was where the Temple originally stood. More recent archaeology has shown the ruins to be that of an early church. Ernest Martin writes the following about what happened in the time of Benjamin of Tudela:

Even in the time of Maimonides, Rabbi Samson and David Kimchi who showed the actual Temple site to be in desolate ruins, there were some Jews who were beginning to think that the Dome of the Rock was indeed the location of the Temple. And within another hundred years, all Jews accepted the changeover with the full sanction of the Jewish authorities. The change in Jewish attitude came quickly and without ambiguity. It first developed with the observations of a Jewish traveler who happened to pass through Jerusalem on his round-trip journey from the city of Tudela in northern Spain into Babylon, then to Egypt and finally back to Tudela. This traveler made his trip in the middle of the twelfth century. He was known as Benjamin of Tudela. He visited Jerusalem for a short visit about **1169 C.E.** He was the first Jew who unambiguously stated that the area of the Dome of the Rock was the Temple site...

Let us now look at an important observation made by Benjamin of Tudela when he got to Jerusalem. He reports an event that occurred 15 years before he visited the city during which some workers on the southwestern hill called by Christians "Mount Zion" (while working on rebuilding a wall of a Christian church) accidentally came upon a cavern which was filled with tombs and other finery that was interpreted by a Jewish resident of Jerusalem as being the tombs of David, Solomon and the other Kings of Judah. The Jewish person who made the interpretation was named Abraham al-Constantini...

This discovery of the so-called "Tomb of David," however, prompted some Jews to question the validity of the southeast hill. This was especially so because this "Tomb of David" was now located at a church that was believed to be built over the ruins of a Jewish synagogue whose walls showed that the building was orientated with its niche directed northward. Though our modern scholars have now surmised that the ruined structure within the church area is actually that of a fourth or fifth century Christian church (NOT a synagogue) that was destroyed by the Persians in **614 C.E.** or by later Muslims in **965 C.E.** (a good summary of these archaeological details is found in the excellent book: *Blue Guide Jerusalem*, p.237), in the Middle Ages it was thought the remains were those of a Jewish synagogue built at the so-called "Tomb of David."

What was striking about the holy niche in the building was its northward orientation that seemed to focus attention toward the Haram esh-Sharif and the Dome of the Rock. Since Jewish tradition stated that early synagogues in Palestine were normally oriented toward the Temple, this particular configuration of this church (that was erroneously thought to be a synagogue) was precisely in the direction of the Dome of the Rock. This appeared to be proof that the region of the Haram esh-Sharif must have been the true site of the Temple (and that it was NOT situated on the southeast ridge as all history and biblical teaching demanded that it be). Because of this assumption, within a century of this so-called "archaeological" discovery, Jews were now speaking dogmatically about "the Royal Tombs on Mount Zion"...

In **1270 to 1291** there is The Itinerary of the Anonymous Pupil of Nachmanides who not only visited the site of the "Tomb of David" (and the other kings) but he described a building at the place which was then being called (hold on to your hats, folks), "the Temple of David" with the Hebrew name *Heikhal* describing it. This same Hebrew word was that which sometimes was used for the Holy of Holies in the actual Temples. And note this. This later Jewish traveler gave a further interpretation about this new site on the Christian "Mount Sion." He stated: "Some [Jews] say that the Ark of the Covenant which was brought by David [to Jerusalem] rested here [on the southwest hill] until he built the Temple." The author then added the further interpretation: "Not far away [from this "Temple"] is the Tower of David, built of huge stones." This was the Christian "Tower of David" located at the Jaffe Gate to the

north and west. The author then stated that anyone can see that this Tower of David "is an ancient building." This new location for the "Tower of David" was near half a mile from the true site.

So, by the end of the thirteenth century, even the Jewish authorities throughout the world had mistakenly gone over to believing that the southwest hill was indeed the original "Mount Zion" of David's time. And with the so-called "synagogue" under the church where the "Tomb" was supposed to have been pointing its niche toward the Dome of the Rock, it was easy for the whole community of the Jews (along with the Christians and Muslims) to identify the area of the Haram esh-Sharif as the former Temple site of the Jews. They also began to believe that the so-called "Tower of David" at the Jaffe Gate was the real "Tower" of David. The truth is, that false "Tower" was built no earlier than the sixth century and it was situated about three quarters of a mile northwest of where the former and accurate "Citadel [Tower] of David" was positioned in biblical times. From this time onward, the confusion (it should be called "the deception") was now complete and within two generations after the time of the Crusades, all people (including the Jews) now accepted the Dome of the Rock as the place near where the Holy of Holies once existed. They forgot all about the proper place on the southeast ridge.

This was the period when all peoples finally accepted the southwest hill of Jerusalem as the actual "Zion," and they forgot the real biblical "Zion" on the southeast hill...The Jewish authorities had been swayed by this archaeological discovery and the orientation of the so-called "synagogue" at what was considered the "Tomb of David." They shifted the real "Mount Zion" of biblical Jerusalem erroneously to the southwest hill. So entrenched did this new concept become regarding the geography of the city that both Christians, Muslim and Jews began to accept the southwestern "Zion" as certain. As a matter of fact, as I explain in my book, all scholars in England and America until the year **1875 C.E.** strongly believed that the southwest hill was the "Mount Zion" that David conquered from the Jebusites.

Thankfully, however, common sense finally returned to the thinking of scholars about **1875 C.E.** It was the indefatigable efforts of W.F. Birch in England who wrote his passionate pleas (he held out almost single-handedly against the opinions of all the scholars in his day) that the southwest hill WAS WRONG and that the southeast hill was the correct "Mount Zion." [Following the discovery of Hezekiah's tunnel from the Gihon spring to the Pool of Siloam] He was [proved] right! (**Major Keys in Discovering the Lost Temples of Jerusalem**, <http://askelm.com/temple/t011112.htm>).

No Jew ever pointed out the present Wailing Wall as the place where Jews should assemble until the infamous Rabbi Luria in the sixteenth century. He was a mystic who had great visions. The great "Ari" told Rabbi Abraham to pray at the Wailing Wall and that God's divine presence was behind it and as a sign this was true said that Rabbi Abraham would live 22 years more. He died 22 years later and this sign sealed the deal as the true site of the Temple.



It wasn't until the Jewish enlightenment 200 years later that Judaism pulled out of his false Kabbalistic teachings. While the Jews moved on from his false Kabbalistic teachings this identification given through false visions was not corrected and the Wailing Wall is still looked on as the last remaining wall of the true Temple complex and they mistakenly believe that the Dome of the Rock stands on the site of Solomon's Temple.

The City of David Today

I have travelled to Jerusalem twice. The first time was in 1999 and the second time was in 2008. I learned about Ernest Martin's research in the years between the two trips so I was very keen to personally check the sites out that Ernest Martin spoke about in his research when I went on my second trip in 2008.

The one thing that surprised me most when I went back was the greatly increased Jewish interest in the City of David. Some time after my first trip they opened up a tourist archaeological park in the City of David.

The highlight of the tourist park is the walk through Hezekiah's tunnel which attracts hordes of tourists, mostly Jewish. There are beautiful gardens near Warren's Shaft and low on the south-east slope south of the Gihon Spring. There is a stone walkway all the way up the eastern side of the City of David from the Pool of Siloam right back up to the main tourist entrance at the top. Near the main entrance at the top there is a wonderful lookout of the whole of the City of David and the Kidron Valley.

The Jews are increasingly interested in the City of David from an archaeological viewpoint and with the great popularity of the site with the Jewish tourists it is quite conceivable that they would try to extend the park and buy up some of the Arab residences to the south.

From a Jewish point of view the land those properties are on are worth their weight in gold from a historical perspective and they would probably be more than willing to offer the local Arab residents 10 times the value those Arab residents could get for those properties on the open market. It is quite conceivable over the next decade that the Jews could acquire the property that Ernest Martin has advocated that the original Temples of God stood on.

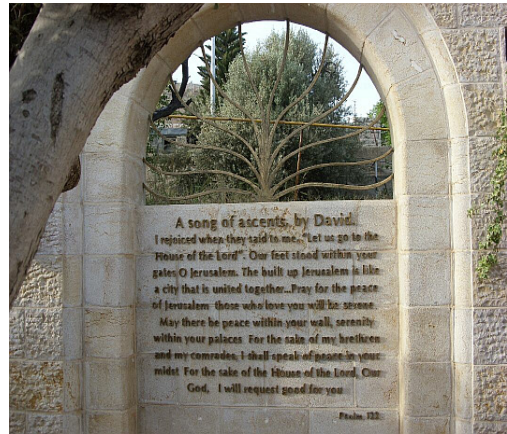
If they do gain that land in the future in the City of David they would probably become more receptive to the belief that the Temples were located in the City of David at the site advocated by Ernest Martin than they currently are. They would probably see it as a golden opportunity to realise a dream they have held for the past 2000 years – to rebuild the Temple of God.

Below are a series of photos of the City of David that I took on my 2008 trip to give the reader a better feel of this fascinating historical place.

This first photo shows the tourist entrance to the archaeological park from the nearby City of David lookout.



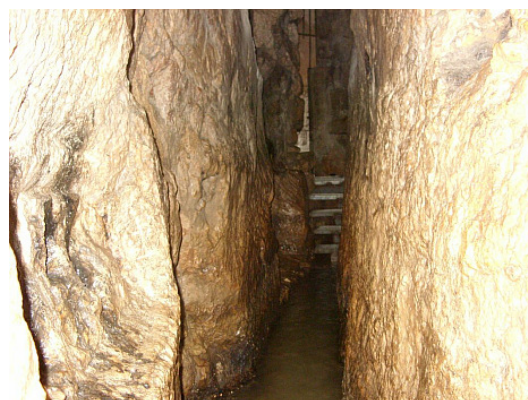
The next two photos are the entrance to the tourist park.



The following couple of photos show the view from the lookout at the top of the City of David looking north and looking south. The height from the top to the bottom of the Kidron Valley below is about the equivalent to about a 20 story building and is quite impressive.



The following few photos show the descent down Warren's Shaft and then the descent to the Gihon Spring and into Hezekiah's tunnel.



The next three photos show the Pool of Siloam at the end of Hezekiah's tunnel near the bottom of the City of David. You can see the natural defensive cliffs surrounding the bottom of the City of David.



The next three photos show the stone walkway around the eastern slope of the City of David.



This photo shows the view looking north from the bottom of the Kidron Valley.



The next two photos show the gardens on the eastern slope of the City of David.



The next photo shows the residences near where the Holy of Holies would have been located according to Ernest Martin.



The next photo shows the view down to the bottom of the Kidron Valley from where the Temple stood according to Ernest Martin.



On this last photo I have illustrated a rough outline of where the Temple stood according to Ernest Martin's research.



PART TWO: WHERE WAS JESUS CHRIST CRUCIFIED?

Jesus Christ was Crucified Outside the Gate and Outside the Camp

In the second part of this presentation we shall look at where Jesus Christ really was crucified, buried and resurrected.

We begin, first of all, by examining a crucial key to the geography of where Christ was crucified given by Paul in **Hebrews 13:10-13**.

We have an altar from which those who serve the tabernacle have no right to eat. For the bodies of those animals, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned outside the camp. Therefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered **OUTSIDE THE GATE**. Therefore let us go forth to Him, **OUTSIDE THE CAMP**, bearing His reproach.

The Apostle Paul tells us that Jesus was crucified “**outside the gate**” **AND** “**outside the camp**.”

Outside the gate means that Jesus was crucified outside the walls of the Old City of Jerusalem as it was at the time.

This, at first, would seem to rule out the Church of the Holy Sepulchre which is situated inside the Old City of Jerusalem in its NW section. However, this area was outside the walls at the time of Jerusalem, though the northern wall was extended to bring it within Jerusalem in the decades that followed.

What does “outside the camp” mean? Paul speaks of the bodies of animals being burned outside the camp after their blood is brought to the sanctuary in the Temple. Paul seems to infer that Christ was crucified outside the camp at nearly the same place as the bodies of sacrificial animals were burned.

So just what does “outside the camp” mean? John Keyser in his article “**Just Where in Jerusalem Did Our Savior Die?**” (<http://hope-of-israel.org/wherejer.htm>) tells us the following:

Numbers 15:35-36 makes it clear that the death penalty UNDER THE LAW OF MOSES was to be administered “outside the camp.” If we can determine the LIMITS of “the camp” this will give us a clue to the site of the crucifixion.

During the time the Israelites were moving through the wilderness, they encamped, at the end of the days march, in a certain manner - a certain order. **Numbers 2** states that “the people of Israel [were] to camp around the tent of meeting though at a DISTANCE, each under his respective standard and by their clans’ ensigns.” This “distance” is defined in **Joshua 3:3-4**:

“When you see the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God with the Levite priests bearing it, leave your places and follow it; so that you may know the way to go, because you have never walked this path before. **BUT KEEP A DISTANCE OF 3,000 FEET [2,000 CUBITS] BETWEEN IT AND YOURSELVES**; do not get nearer to it.”

The sanctity of the ark was thus maintained. Ernest L. Martin, in his book "Secrets of Golgotha" expounds on this:

"But why 2,000 cubits [3,000 feet]? It was determined that the place of a person's residence could extend outward 2,000 cubits from his central 'place' of abode. If, for example, one lived in a tent in the desert, one could consider his 'place' as extending 2,000 cubits from the tent itself. If one lived in a town with walls around it, then his 'place' was reckoned as being 2,000 cubits from the walls because the whole of the town was looked on as a corporate 'place.'

"This reckoning was arrived at by noting that there were about 2,000 cubits between the Ark of the Covenant (where God symbolically resided) and the rest of the Israelites while they were on their march toward the holyland. From this it was determined that God considered his own 'place' (or residence) as having an extension of 2,000 cubits from the Holy of Holies wherein was supposed to be the Ark of the Covenant. Similarly, each of the Levitical towns was allowed 2,000 cubits surrounding its walls as being their 'CITY LIMITS'" (**Numbers 35:5, 6**). (ASK Publications, 1983. Pages 44-45).

From this we know, then, that the place of execution was 'OUTSIDE THE CAMP' - AT LEAST 2,000 CUBITS OR 3,000 FEET AWAY FROM THE SANCTUARY OR TABERNACLE.

At the time of Christ the Sanhedrin (Jewish governing body) used the SAME rule of thumb for the city of Jerusalem. With the Court of the Sanhedrin as the center, they took a radius of 3,000 feet encircling it as the LIMITS OF THE ENCAMPMENT!

Anything beyond this radius was "OUTSIDE THE CAMP"; and somewhere, beyond this line, Christ was executed. THIS ABSOLUTELY PROHIBITS JEREMIAH'S GROTTO AS BEING THE LOCATION OF CHRIST'S CRUCIFIXION; because it is well within the 3,000 foot zone! IT IS NOT "OUTSIDE THE CAMP"!

Jesus Christ was crucified both "outside the gate" – outside the walls of Jerusalem and "outside the camp" which was a specific distance around 3000 feet outside the walls of Jerusalem.

This theoretically rules out the two major contenders that claim to be the place of the crucifixion. The traditional Catholic and Orthodox place, the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, is in the NW of the Old City.

It also theoretically rules out the traditional site believed by Protestants – the "skull hill" near the Garden Tomb which was just to the north of the Damascus Gate at Jesus' time though it was further than the required distance if one counts from the Temple and not from the walls of the city.

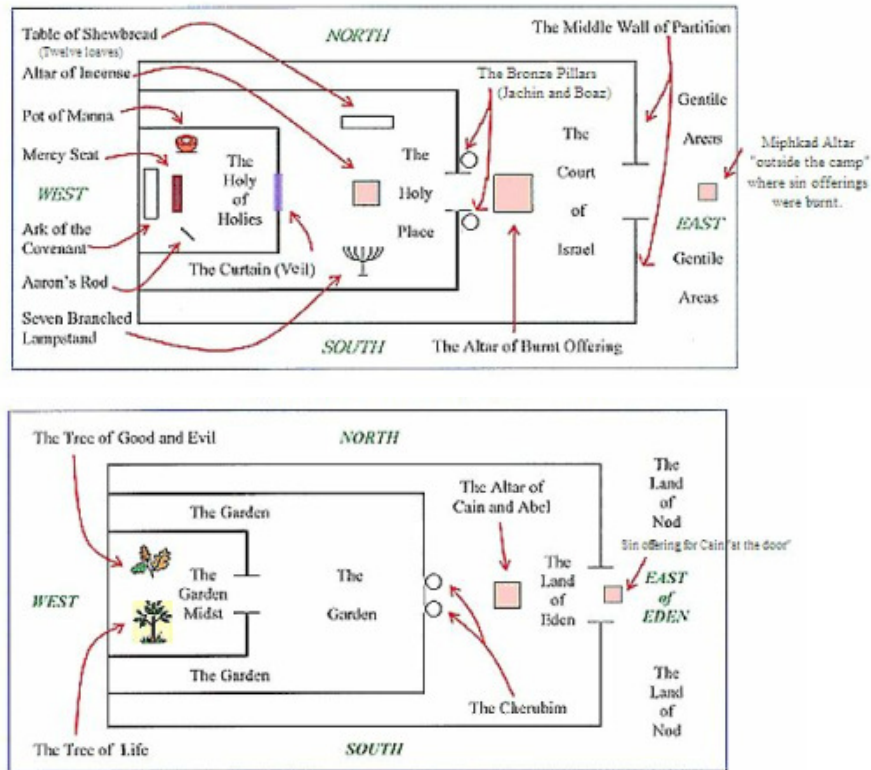
Symbolism of the Temple and Animal Sacrifices points to an Eastern Site of Crucifixion

Some of the strongest evidence pointing us to the true location of Christ's crucifixion is the symbolism of the Temple and the animal sacrifices.

The symbolism of the Temple and the Garden of Eden and the symbolism of where all the different types of sin offerings were burned as an atonement for the people all point to our Saviour, as a sin offering for mankind, being crucified **EAST** of the Temple.

There were three main divisions in the Temple – the Holy of holies, the Holy Place and the Court of Israel. The only entrance to all of these three places in the Temple (and corresponding divisions in the tabernacle) was from the **EAST**.

We have already looked at the how the divisions of the Temple mirrored the divisions of Eden in the Genesis account.



The midst of the Garden of Eden corresponds to the Holy of Holies where the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil were and where Adam and Eve probably met with God.

The Garden of Eden represented the Holy Place. Following their sin of eating the forbidden fruit Adam and Eve were expelled from the Garden.

The LORD God sent him out of the garden of Eden to till the ground from which he was taken. So He drove out the man; and He placed cherubim at the **EAST** of the garden of Eden, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to guard the way to the tree of life (**Genesis 3:23-24**).

Adam and Eve were allowed to still live within Eden though they were no longer in the Garden of Eden. Notice that the cherubim were placed at the **EAST** of the Garden of Eden. The only entrance into the Garden of Eden was from the east. This corresponds to the fact that all the doors or entrances into the tabernacle and the Temples were at the east. God always faced east in this symbolic arrangement.

When Cain got angry and killed his brother Abel he was expelled from the Land of Eden:

Then Cain went out from **the presence of the LORD** and dwelt in the **land of Nod** on the **EAST** of Eden (**Genesis 4:16**).

Cain was cut off and outside the Camp i.e. the area represented later by the "Camp of Israel". This area symbolically is also represented by the Court of Gentiles which was outside the entire Temple complex. Ernest Martin comments further about his expulsion:

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".

The Hebrew of this verse ["sin lies at the door" – **Genesis 4:7**] 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 from the Land of Nod back into the Land of Eden. Remember, Cain had been expelled eastward from Eden and he could not reenter 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" [Ezekiel 43:21-44:1] Jewish sources tell us that this particular altar was located some 2000 cubits east of the central part of the Temple.

In the time of Jesus, this altar was placed slightly downslope from the southern area of the Mount of Olives...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" (Temples, p.250-251).

In his book *Secrets of Golgotha* Ernest Martin makes these comments about the importance of the eastern area of Jerusalem in relation to Jesus Christ and His ministry:

Had the true dimensions of "the Camp" been taken into consideration, the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in the west and the Garden Tomb in the north would never have been thought to be legitimate places for the crucifixion of Jesus, because both sites are positioned well inside the official "Camp" at Jerusalem. The shape of the "Camp" at Jerusalem in the time of Jesus utterly forbids the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and the Garden Tomb area as being candidates for the site of Jesus' crucifixion. Thus, the shape and dimensions of the "Camp" that surrounded the Temple and Jerusalem is a major key that helps the modern reader to know the area where Jesus was crucified...

What this geographical information provides is a certain fact that the crucifixion of Jesus had to occur at least 2000 cubits (3000 feet) east of the Holy Place in the Temple. This is why the events associated with Jesus in his role as the Messiah of Israel took place east of the Temple and the city of Jerusalem. It was recognized in the first century that the Messiah would indeed come from the east to Jerusalem and to the people of Israel (**Matthew 24:27; Luke 17:24**), and the Jewish authorities at the time reckoned that the Messiah would enter Jerusalem from the east because of the statement in Ezekiel that the Glory of God would come from the east (**Ezekiel 43:1-4**).

This was the region of the "camp of Israel" that the tribe of Judah dominated and it was the direction toward which God looked out over Israel and the world from His divine position within the Temple. All Jews who lived in Jerusalem in the first century would have known that the indication mentioned in the Book of Hebrews about the sin offerings that were equated symbolically with Jesus and his crucifixion, were all performed east of the Temple. This is one of the main reasons why the crucifixion took place "without the camp" east of the Temple and on the Mount of Olives...

It is interesting, however, that Judah (the chief tribe) was located east of the Temple so that it would always be in front of God who viewed his people looking eastward from the Holy of Holies. People would orient themselves in matters of direction by using the east as their standard direction (and even today we use the word orient in the same way, though most of us now use north as the standard). All directions for geographical purposes in the Bible have their standard based on the east (the direction God looked toward from his Holy of Holies in the Temple)...

It was expected that the Messiah himself would emerge from Judah. Thus, all the significant acts of Jesus in his role of Messiah in the capital city of Jerusalem (his crucifixion, his resurrection, his return to heaven, and his return from heaven, etc.) have their occurrences just "outside the camp" which was just opposite the eastern entrance to Judah (Golgotha, p.62-63, 60).

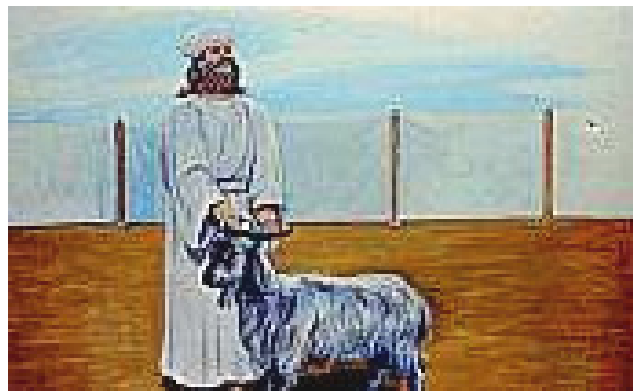
When the Israelites brought their offerings to the tabernacle in the wilderness they brought it to the door that led into the tabernacle. The only door into the tabernacle where only the priests could enter was at the east side. The Holy of Holies faced eastwards and the tribe of Judah, from which Jesus came from, was in the primary position to the east of the tabernacle.

Jesus Christ symbolically was a sin offering for all of us. Where were the **sin offerings** taken to be burned with fire and consumed as an offering in the place of the people? We read the following in **Leviticus 4**:

Now the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, Speak to the children of Israel, saying: 'If a person sins unintentionally against any of the commandments of the LORD *in anything* which ought not to be done, and does any of them, if the anointed priest sins, bringing guilt on the people, then let him offer to the LORD for his sin which he has sinned a young bull without blemish as a sin offering...

Then the anointed priest shall take some of the bull's blood and bring it to the tabernacle of meeting...But the bull's hide and all its flesh, with its head and legs, its entrails and offal— **the whole bull he shall carry OUTSIDE THE CAMP to a clean place, where the ashes are poured out, and burn it on wood with fire;** where the ashes are poured out it shall be burned (**Leviticus 4:1-3, 5, 11-12**).

The sin offerings, which included the bull and goat that was killed on the Day of Atonement and the Red Heifer, were all slain and their blood sprinkled before the inner curtain of the Temple. The dead bodies of these sin offerings were all taken **EAST** outside the camp and burnt in their entirety. Jesus Christ symbolized all these offerings. Jesus was likewise led out from Jerusalem east and crucified near the Miphkad altar on the southern summit on the Mount of Olives where those offerings were destroyed.



Along with the regular sin offerings that were offered during the year there were sin offerings that were also offered on the **Day of Atonement**. The High Priest offered a bull for himself and then after one of two goats were chosen to be killed for the people (the other to be driven to the wilderness picturing Satan cast into the bottomless pit). Both the bull and the goat were also taken outside the camp to be consumed:

The bull for the sin offering and the goat for the sin offering, whose blood was brought in to make atonement in the Holy Place, shall be carried **OUTSIDE THE CAMP**. And they shall burn in the fire their skins, their flesh, and their offal (**Leviticus 16:27**).

Sin is abhorrent to God and so these offerings that represent sin were consumed outside the camp and far away from the presence of God. The greatest of the sin offerings that Jesus Christ symbolised was that of the **Red Heifer**. The red heifer was red, symbolising blood, it was a female cow of 3 years old that was effectively a virgin and had not been yoked (symbolising it being free).

This heifer was burned to ashes and those ashes in a very diluted way were added to the purification waters. These red heifers were very rarely needed to be offered – about once in every few hundred years. Because of the rarity of the red heifer sacrifice it symbolised Jesus Christ being offered once for all time (**Hebrews 9:13, 28**). The interesting thing about the red heifer compared to virtually all the other offerings is that this offering was a female, not a male. Why was it female? The church is called the body of Christ. The church is described

symbolically as a female to marry Christ at His return. The femaleness of the red heifer emphasises that Christ died in our place.

This heifer was burned to ashes and those ashes in a very diluted way were added to the purification waters. These red heifers were very rarely needed to be offered – about once in every few hundred years. The red heifer symbolised Jesus Christ being offered once for all time for all of us in His body.



The apostle Paul writes:

For if the blood of bulls and goats [the sin offerings of the Day of Atonement] and the **ashes of a heifer** [the Red Heifer offered once every few hundred years], sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies for the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?...so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many (**Hebrews 9:13-14, 28**).

We read the following about where the Red Heifer was slaughtered and burned:

Now the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying, 'This *is* the ordinance of the law which the LORD has commanded, saying: 'Speak to the children of Israel, that they bring you a red heifer without blemish, in which there *is* no defect *and* on which a yoke has never come. 'You shall give it to Eleazar the priest, that he may take it **OUTSIDE THE CAMP**, and it shall be slaughtered before him; 'and Eleazar the priest shall take some of its blood with his finger, and sprinkle some of its blood seven times directly in front of the tabernacle of meeting. 'Then the heifer shall be burned in his sight: its hide, its flesh, its blood, and its offal shall be burned...

Then a man *who is* clean shall gather up the ashes of the heifer, and store *them* outside the camp in a clean place; and they shall be kept for the congregation of the children of Israel for the water of purification; it *is* for purifying from sin (**Numbers 19:1-5, 9**).

I'd like to quote now from John Keyser's article "**Just Where in Jerusalem Did Our Savior Die?**" (<http://hope-of-israel.org/wherejer.htm>)" where he speaks about the importance of the Red Heifer sacrifice and the Miphkad Altar on the Mount of Olives where it was offered:

Notice what Ernest L. Martin says about the important Day of Atonement sacrifices:

"The main symbolic emphasis of the Book of Hebrews to the rituals of the Old Covenant deals with Christ's fulfillment of the Day of Atonement sacrifices for sins. "But into the second [the second compartment of the Temple, that is, into the Holy of Holies] went the HIGH PRIEST alone once every year, NOT WITHOUT BLOOD, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people" (**Hebrews 9:7**).

"This happened on the Day of Atonement. The symbolic theme of this holy day continues through chapters nine and ten and is finally concluded with **Hebrews 13:10-13** the verses we have been concerned with. Recall that priests could not eat from the altar mentioned in Hebrews. "Whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle" (**Hebrews 13:10**). Indeed, none of the sacrifices offered on the Day of Atonement could be eaten (which day, by the way, was a FAST DAY in which no food of any kind could be consumed).

"The bodies of the animals offered for sin on that day were burnt to ashes ON THE ALTAR LOCATED OUTSIDE THE CAMP. It was this OUTSIDE ALTAR that became the important altar for Christians to which they were expected to retreat to have the forgiveness of sins.

"WHY THIS PARTICULAR ALTAR? Because the sacrifices on THIS altar were the prime ones which dealt with the sins of Israel and they PREFIGURED PRECISELY what Christ would be doing for mankind at his crucifixion" (**Secrets of Golgotha, pages 28-29**).

Read **Hebrews 13:12-13** again: "And so Jesus also suffered outside the city gate to MAKE THE PEOPLE HOLY THROUGH HIS OWN BLOOD. Let us, then, go to him OUTSIDE THE CAMP, bearing the disgrace he bore."

Leviticus 4:12 mentions "the whole bull he shall carry OUTSIDE THE CAMP TO A CLEAN PLACE, where the ashes are poured out..." What's the significance of the "CLEAN PLACE"? Or, more importantly, WHERE is this clean place?

During Moses' day the HOLIEST REGION within the camp of the Israelites was in front of the entrance to the sanctuary -- on its EAST side. And WHY was this area EAST of the sanctuary holy? Because the sin offering known as the RED HEIFER was killed and burnt to ashes, and the blood sprinkled, in the area just OUTSIDE THE CAMP! The Red Heifer was the HOLIEST of all the Israelites' offerings, and was a sacrifice that was offered ONCE FOR ALL. Notice Alfred Edersheim's explanation:

"As the direct manifestation of sin which separates man from God, defilement by the DEAD required a SIN-OFFERING, and the ASHES OF THE RED HEIFER are expressly so designated in the words: 'It IS A SIN-OFFERING.' [**Numbers 9:17**]. But it DIFFERS from all other sin-offerings. The sacrifice was to be of PURE RED COLOR; one 'upon which never came yoke'; and a FEMALE, all other sin-offerings for the congregation being males...

"But what distinguished it even more from all the others was, that it was a sacrifice offered ONCE FOR ALL (at least so long as its ashes lasted); that its blood was sprinkled, not on the altar, but OUTSIDE THE CAMP TOWARDS [WESTWARD] THE SANCTUARY; and that it was WHOLLY burnt, along with cedarwood, as the symbol of IMPERISHABLE EXISTENCE, hyssop, as that of PURIFICATION FROM CORRUPTION, and 'scarlet,' which from its colour was the EMBLEM OF LIFE.

“Thus the sacrifice of HIGHEST LIFE, brought as a sin-offering, and, so far as possible, ONCE FOR ALL, was in its turn accompanied by the symbols of IMPERISHABLE EXISTENCE, FREEDOM FROM CORRUPTION, AND FULLNESS OF LIFE, so as yet more to intensify its significance. But even this is not all. The gathered ashes with running water were sprinkled on the third and seventh days on that which was to be PURIFIED. Assuredly, if death meant ‘the wages of sin,’ this PURIFICATION pointed, in all its details, to ‘the gift of God,’ which is ‘eternal life,’ THROUGH THE SACRIFICE OF HIM IN WHOM IS THE FULLNESS OF LIFE.” (The Temple, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Michigan. 1987, pages 348-349.)

Do you grasp the depth of meaning and the significance of the sacrifice of the Red Heifer? It pointed DIRECTLY to the sacrifice of Christ. It was offered up ONCE FOR ALL; and realize this, the high priest was PROHIBITED from offering up the Red Heifer himself because it represented Christ -- our HIGH PRIEST!

And WHERE did this sacrifice take place? "In order to sacrifice the Red Heifer, the selected animal was taken from the Temple through the EASTERN GATE ('without the gate' -- Hebrews 13:12) and then led further EAST ('without the camp' -- Hebrews 13:11) to the 'CLEAN PLACE' where it was killed and burnt to ashes." (**Secrets of Golgotha, page 30**).

The Mishnah (Jewish collection of religious-legal decisions developed from the laws of the Old Testament) also points this out:

“There were five gates to the Temple mount: the two Huldah Gates on the south, that served for coming in and going out; the Kiponus Gate on the west, that served for coming in and going out; the Tadi Gate on the north that was not used at all; the EASTERN GATE on which was portrayed the Palace of Shushan. **THROUGH THIS [GATE] THE PRIEST THAT BURNED THE [RED] HEIFER, THE HEIFER, AND ALL THAT AIDED HIM WENT FORTH TO THE MOUNT OF OLIVES.**” (Middoth 1:3).

This plainly shows that in the time of Christ the place for burning the Red Heifer -- the "CLEAN PLACE" -- was located EAST of the Temple ON THE MOUNT OF OLIVES! Edersheim backs this up without equivocation:

“...According to their tradition, there was an ARCHED ROADWAY leading from the EAST GATE of the Temple out UPON THE MOUNT OF OLIVES - double arched, that is, arched also over the supporting pillars, for fear of any possible pollution through the ground upwards. Over this the procession passed.

“ON THE MOUNT OF OLIVES the elders of Israel were already in waiting. First, the priest immersed his whole body, then he approached the pile of cedar-, pine-, and fig-wood which was heaped like a pyramid, but having an opening in the middle, LOOKING TOWARDS THE WEST. Into this the RED HEIFER was thrust, and bound, with its head towards the south and its face looking TO THE WEST, the priest standing east of the sacrifice, his face, of course, ALSO TURNED WESTWARDS.

“Slaying the sacrifice with his right hand, he caught up the blood in his left. SEVEN TIMES he dipped his finger in it, sprinkling it TOWARDS THE MOST HOLY PLACE, WHICH HE WAS SUPPOSED TO HAVE IN FULL VIEW OVER THE PORCH OF SOLOMON or through the eastern gate.” (The Temple, pages 352-353).

The author of the apocryphal work of Barnabas (late 1st or early 2nd century) makes mention that during the ritual of the Red Heifer the priests tied a CRIMSON THREAD to a nearby TREE an act that has tremendous symbolic meaning when one understands HOW Christ was put to death.

From this area on the slopes of the Mount of Olives the priest could LOOK OVER the eastern wall of the Temple into the sanctuary itself. The Mishnah states that the "walls were high, SAVE ONLY THE EASTERN WALL, because the Priest that burns the [Red] Heifer and stands ON THE TOP OF THE MOUNT OF OLIVES should be able to LOOK DIRECTLY INTO THE ENTRANCE OF THE SANCTUARY when the blood is sprinkled." (Middoth 2:4).

The enormous curtain hanging in front of the [Holy Place] could also be clearly seen. That is why the centurion and the others present at the crucifixion SAW the curtain tear from top to bottom.

Since the Red Heifer was burnt to ashes at this site on the Mount of Olives, this spot was, then, the point of origin for the MAIN PURIFICATION RITES of the Israelites; and therefore Christ the SUPREME sacrifice, represented by the Red Heifer, had to die right here FACING the Holy of Holies!

He had to sprinkle His blood BEFORE the sanctuary. The blood of the Red Heifer was sprinkled OUTSIDE THE CAMP TOWARDS THE SANCTUARY; whereas the blood of the other sacrifices was sprinkled on the altar situated IN the Temple! In other words, Christ had to shed His blood before the presence of His Father in the Temple -- in the Holy of Holies. That is why He died facing the curtain, looking west towards the presence of His Father!

The fact that Christ died facing WEST towards His Father's House has come down to us in various traditions. Damascenus, the eminent 8th-century theologian of the Eastern Church, stated that **"Jesus' eyes were turned toward the West..."** (Lib.IV., cap.13); and the English Bishop Hall (1574-1656) echoed this in a sermon to his congregation: **"Our Saviour was crucified WITH HIS FACE TO THE WEST (XXXV)."** Even the Venerable Bede (673-735) concurs with this (in Lucum, cap.93)!...

Further understanding of the sacrifice of the red heifer is offered by Edersheim:

"Thus, also, we understand WHY the red heifer is, so to speak, the most INTENSE of sin-offerings, was WHOLLY burnt outside the camp, and other sin-offerings only partially so. For this burning SIGNIFIED that 'in the theocracy there was no one, who by his own holiness, could bear or take away the sin imputed to these sin-offerings..."

"This parallelism between the blood of Christ and the ashes of a heifer, on the one hand, and on the other between the purification of the flesh by these means, and that of the conscience from dead works, is thus expressed in Heb. 9:13,14: 'If the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling the defiled, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, purifying your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?' " (The Temple, pages 350-351).

Paul's statements in **Hebrews 13** now become intelligible when we realize that to symbolically retrace Christ's steps and "go to Him OUTSIDE THE CAMP, bearing the disgrace He bore," Christians in Paul's day would have to go symbolically EASTWARD from the literal Temple in Jerusalem, pass through the EASTERN OR BEAUTIFUL GATE, **travel over the TWO-TIERED ARCHED BRIDGE over the Kidron Valley**, and proceed on to the summit of the MOUNT OF OLIVES for the forgiveness of their sins.

It was here - not far from the altar named MIPHKAD -- where the GREATEST SIN OFFERING of all time sprinkled His blood on the ground before the sanctuary and the presence of His Father, to PURIFY all people everywhere and from all ages. Our Savior died in the HOLIEST AREA surrounding the city of Jerusalem (Berakoth 9:5).

Ernest Martin writes the following about why the Red Heifer was female:

The sin offering of the Red Heifer had to be a perfect female with red colored hair, never yoked (**Numbers 19:2**) and the rabbis understood that it should never have been mounted by a male (Mishnah, Parah 2:4). This Red Heifer was burnt to ashes and the ashes were mixed with clean spring water. It was with these purification waters that not only Israelites were purified from ceremonial defilements, but even the priests and the Temple itself were cleansed and purified in certain ways with these holy waters.

Thus, the Red Heifer was a most important sin offering. But what did it represent to first century Christians? The fact is, the animal was a female and how could this relate to Jesus who was a male? This is an interesting point, and we may find that the apostle Paul gave the proper interpretation of how this female sin offering (the holiest of all) represented Jesus in a figurative way though Jesus was a male.

Let us look at one central teaching of Paul in which he reckoned Jesus to be "female" in a figurative (or mystical) way. This was in regard to his "Body," which Paul called the Ekklesia (which most translators today render as "Church"). Interestingly, the word Ekklesia is feminine. In using the word Ekklesia in the feminine was not simply a grammatical formality of Paul, but it had profound typical significance. This is because Paul called "the Ekklesia" the "Body of Christ" (**1 Corinthians 12:12-27**). In this case, the "Body" is feminine, not the actual masculine body of Jesus.

This feminine "Body" certainly represented the Body of Christ because it was equivalent to "his flesh" (his one flesh). This "one flesh" relationship is what Paul called the marriage union that Jesus has with his Ekklesia. In Paul's teaching the husband and wife represented "one flesh." To Paul, one was masculine (the husband) and the Ekklesia was feminine (the wife). Notice how Paul explained his teaching.

"Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Church, and gave himself for it....So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loves his wife loves himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourishes and cherishes it, even as the Lord the Church: for we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the Church" (**Ephesians 5:25-32**).

In a typical sense the Ekklesia is the "wife" of Jesus who is glorified as the Christ...It explains (from Paul's point of view) how the Red Heifer could be feminine and yet denote Jesus as well.

Note that the Red Heifer was an animal that was required to be free, unblemished, and to be a female virgin. So holy were the ashes of this sin offering that even the most sacred items of the Temple itself were purified by the waters mixed with its ashes. In a word, the Red Heifer had to be "holy, without blemish" and not having spot. Also, its purification waters were able to sanctify people, to cleanse them, and to wash them clean from all impurities.

Remarkably, these are the identical factors the apostle Paul associated with the Ekklesia (the "wife" of Christ), because he thought that the Ekklesia was also a free woman and one "without a yoke" as the Red Heifer (**see Galatians 4:22-31**). He told the Galatians to "stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free" (**Galatians 5:1**).

Note that the Ekklesia, like the Red Heifer, was considered by Paul a chaste virgin:

"For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ" (**2 Corinthians 11:2**) (**Golgotha p.377-379**).

Ernest Martin also writes the following concerning the Red Heifer and how Jesus was crucified at the same place on the Mount of Olives where it was offered:

In the "Letter of Barnabas," which was written by a knowledgeable Jew about A.D.90 and one who was well acquainted with the sacrificial system of the Temple, the author also stated that the Red Heifer in Christian circles was identified as being typical of Jesus at the time of his crucifixion. He stated most dogmatically: **"The calf IS Jesus: the sinful men offering it are those who led him to the slaughter"** (8:2).

Just as the high priest and his attendants led the Red Heifer from the Temple eastward, through the Miphkad Gate and across the double tiered arched bridge over the Kidron Ravine and up to the Miphkad Altar on the Mount of Olives, the author of the "Letter of Barnabas" said the priests "led him [Jesus] to the slaughter." And true enough, in the ritual it was the priests who led the calf EASTWARD across the "Bridge of the Red Heifer"...

A belief in a western crucifixion of Jesus [at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre] cannot equate the Red Heifer or any of its rituals with Jesus. It is clear that such a belief in a western crucifixion site is looking to an area that is diametrically opposite the proper direction and is looking to an area completely devoid of any ceremonies associated with the Red Heifer [the same applies to the northern site near the Garden Tomb]...

As a matter of interest, the author had just stated in this context that Christians allegorically had an altar to which they ought to go (**Hebrews 13:10**).

That particular Third Altar of the Temple was that altar near the summit of the Mount of Olives...[Paul] had this singular altar (the Third Altar) in mind because it suited his allegorical illustration in an exact geographical way. He described it [by saying "WE (christians) have an altar] whereof they [the priests who served the physical Temple] have no right to eat" (Hebrews 13:10). And remarkably, in regard to the [sin offerings and the Red Heifer] which the author of Hebrews mentioned in his illustration, the priests ARE INDEED FORBIDDEN TO EAT THEM!

This is what Moses commanded. "And no sin offering, whereof any of the blood is brought into the tabernacle of the congregation to reconcile withal in the holy place, shall be eaten: it shall be burnt in the fire" (**Leviticus 6:30**).

This is why the author of Hebrews stated, concerning the sin offerings that typified Jesus, that the priests "have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle" (Hebrews 13:10). His identification regarding this command forbidding the eating of these animals could not be more exact. Any one familiar with the Temple ceremonies in the first century would have understood this point...

The appropriateness of this eastern region is shown by Ezekiel because he stated quite categorically that the sin offerings designated to be taken to the "appointed place" (the Miphkad Altar) were located "without the sanctuary" (**Ezekiel 43:21**), and these offerings are the ones mentioned by the author of the Book of Hebrews. These animals were taken through the eastern gate of the Temple. This eastern gate was given a proper name by Ezekiel. He called it "the Gate of [or, to] the Outward Sanctuary" (**Ezekiel 44:1**, the KJV has the proper translation)...

The special holiness of this "Outward Sanctuary" was assured because this was where the Shekinah retreated and continued to reside in the time of Ezekiel (**Ezekiel 11:23**),

apparently until after the Babylonian Captivity. We should recall that wherever the Shekinah resides, is technically where the Sanctuary is. So, the "Outward Sanctuary" became even more sanctified than the "Inward Sanctuary" which was the main Temple of Ezekiel, because the Shekinah left the western part of the Temple and went to its extreme eastern part (to the Miphkad Altar) at the top of the Mount of Olives. Indeed, this Altar at the "Outward Sanctuary" became more sanctified still, when Jesus was sacrificed in that same general area in **A.D. 30**. It was to this eastern Altar that the Book of Hebrews tells Christians to [go] bear His reproach (**Golgotha, p.48-51**).

Paul said in **Hebrews 13:10** that we christians have an altar that the priests have no right to eat from. The place of the Miphkad altar on the Mount of Olives is for us christians to go to and remember what Jesus did for us as a sin offering in our place.

There is one more piece of symbolic evidence that points to an eastern site for the crucifixion of Christ. It is a ceremony from China that has its roots way back in antiquity and has some remarkable similarities with symbolism from the Garden of Eden and the Bible. It is called the Chinese Border Sacrifice.

The following is from John Keyser's article "Just Where in Jerusalem Did Our Savior Die?" (<http://hope-of-israel.org/wherejer.htm>)" which explains this remarkable ceremony:

For forty centuries -- stretching back into the dim, distant mists of time -- the reigning emperors of China traveled ANNUALLY to the border of their country or the imperial city. There, on an OUTDOOR ALTAR, they sacrificed and burned young UNBLEMISHED bullocks and lambs to ShangTi -- the "Heavenly Ruler."

The BORDER SACRIFICE, as it came to be known, was a ceremony that reached back in unbroken sequence to the time prior to the first dynastic rule beginning in 2205 B.C. This unusual ceremony ended in 1911 after a continual observance of more than 4,000 years!

What was this "border sacrifice" that so commanded a centuries-spanning loyalty and devotion?

According to the Historical Records compiled by Ssu Ma Ch'ien, the Chinese emperors celebrated this mystical rite at MOUNT TAI in Shan-tung, AT THE EASTERN BORDER OF CHINA! This is significant!

Believe it or not, the ancient written characters of the Chinese language - known as pictographs - preserve the true meaning of this annual "border sacrifice." Ethel R. Nelson and Richard E. Broadberry, in their fascinating book *Mysteries Confucius Couldn't Solve*, make this assertion:

"We believe that a beautiful history of the beginnings of the human race on the newly [re] created planet earth have been perfectly preserved in the ancient written characters of the Chinese language!....With the passage of century after century, the origin and true meaning of these characters were lost and became mysterious, even as ShangTi also became mysterious" (Read Books, Dunlap, Tn. 1986. Pp.13-14).

After a careful study of the most ancient Chinese character forms, especially the Bronzeware and Oracle Bone scripts, these authors came to the following astonishing conclusions:

"Interestingly, in one of the ancient books of the Chou dynasty, it is recorded: 'because man sinned in ancient times, the God of Heaven ordered Chung and Li to BLOCK UP THE WAY BETWEEN HEAVEN AND EARTH.' Perhaps 'Chung' and 'Li' were the two angels on either side of Eden's gate!

“So God expelled Adam and Eve from the Garden. As they passed through the EASTERN GARDEN GATE, they realized that this meant their exclusion from the life-giving Tree of Life and immortality....A barrier, fence had been set up past which they could not go to eat from the Tree of Life. There were two angels [cherubim] guarding the way. Instead of ‘hands’ at the gate entrance, some ancient forms [of pictographs] depict ‘the presence of God.’ It seems, therefore, that the GATE OF EDEN became the new PLACE OF WORSHIPPING GOD, since sin had prevented a face-to-face visit with God on the Holy Mount inside the Garden” (Mysteries Confucius Couldn’t Solve, pps. 80-81).

Authors Nelson and Broadberry continue:

“An UNBLEMISHED LAMB, symbolizing the SAVIOR TO COME, was sacrificed and burned AT THE GATE. Animal sacrifices became an important part of their worship. The pictograph reveals the person bending in obeisance, and offering with a hand something to God. A Bronzeware figure for the same character, sacrifice, portrays a person kneeling before God. That the offering to God WAS ALWAYS MADE OUTSIDE THE GARDEN is quite obvious in yet another form of the same character...” (Ibid, p.83).

With these startling revelations, drawn from the ancient Chinese pictographs, it becomes evident that the new site for worshipping God, after our first parents were expelled from the Garden of Eden, was at the EAST GATE...

Nelson and Broadberry expound further on their researches:

“After Adam and Eve had been expelled from Eden, the NEW LOCATION for worship, therefore, was the GARDEN BOUNDARY, BORDER. A boundary had been set up at the gate, a barrier, to keep the first couple from the Tree of Life. There are a number of Oracle Bone renditions for this....

“Eden's gate was now the border or boundary past which they were prevented going by the presence of the cherubim angels. There are many [Chinese] characters meaning border or boundary. All have the same reference, THE BORDER OF THE GARDEN OF EDEN, MORE SPECIFICALLY, AT THE EAST GATE....

“How amazing that there are so many Chinese characters for BORDER, each of them denoting the BORDER OF EDEN: the Garden, the Garden enclosure, the gate or in yet another, the Holy Mountain BORDER! This is not difficult to interpret....

“WE MAY CONCLUDE THAT THIS...SERVICE OUTSIDE OF EDEN'S EAST GATE, WAS A "BORDER SACRIFICE" INITIATED BY SHANGTI [GOD], HIMSELF. After Adam and Eve were driven from the Garden, they could ask forgiveness for sin by a symbolic animal sacrifice at the border or gate of the Garden of Eden. THE BORDER SACRIFICE AT EDEN'S CLOSED GATE LOOKED FORWARD TO THE SACRIFICE OF THE ‘SEED OF THE WOMAN’ [CHRIST] ON BEHALF OF ALL THE DESCENDANTS OF ADAM” (Ibid, pps. 90, 91, 92-93).

The ancient Chinese border sacrifice thus pictured the sacrifices Adam and Eve made at the EAST GATE of the Garden of Eden.

Because of the long passage of time, a true understanding of the meaning of this sacrifice was lost - along with the true knowledge of ShangTi or God. The Chinese border sacrifice survived in name only, to become a mysterious ritual, a national custom of unknown significance and origin.

According to the authors of Mysteries Confucius Couldn't Solve, the death of Christ at Calvary (the "Place of the Skull") was a DIRECT FULFILLMENT OF THE CHINESE BORDER SACRIFICE:

"The place of crucifixion was on a small hill, called Calvary. Calvary was located OUTSIDE JERUSALEM'S GATE. How important this fact is, for the Hebrew Scriptures relate: 'So Jesus also suffered OUTSIDE THE GATE in order to sanctify the people through His own blood.'

"Even as Adam's sacrifice of unblemished lambs had been OUTSIDE EDEN'S GATE, so also was the Lamb of God to be offered OUTSIDE of Jerusalem, the holy Hebrew city. This too was a fulfillment of the ancient Chinese BORDER SACRIFICE, the "Border" being Eden's gate, TYPIFYING JERUSALEM'S [EAST] GATE WHERE THE GREAT SACRIFICE FOR ALL MANKIND WAS TO BE MADE" (Ibid, p.116).

Where Did Abraham Offer Isaac?

One of the main reasons why the Jews consider the place of the Temple to be the site where Abraham built an altar to offer Isaac is because we read in **2 Chronicles 3:1** that the Temple was built in Mount Moriah.

Then Solomon began to build the house of the Lord at Jerusalem in mount Moriah, where the Lord appeared to David his father, in the place that David had prepared in the threshingfloor of Ornan the Jebusite.

Is this mount Moriah the same place where Abraham offered Isaac? Ernest Martin shows that the term mount Moriah is not restricted to the area of the Dome of the Rock or the Ophel site where we've seen the Temple was really built:

Zion consisted of "mountains" (plural), not one single mountain [**Psalm 133:3**]. 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 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 (**Temples, p.346-347**).

The word "Moriah" itself means God sees, or the place to which God gives his utmost attention. Or, as Moses explained the word in **Genesis 22:14**, it signified "the Mount of the Lord," and he added to that phrase the meaning that the Mount was where "it shall be seen." It meant the region or the mountain that God would look upon as the place of his singular attention...

The highest mountain in the region of Moriah...was the Mount of Olives. This is why the Mount of Olives should be called Upper Mount Moriah, and the place where the Temples were later built as Lower Mount Moriah. Also, these mountains in Jerusalem (the Zion of God) became known as the "mountains of Zion" (**Psalm 133:3**). And since the Mount of Olives was the highest, it could technically be called either Upper Mount Moriah or Upper Mount Zion (**Golgotha p.154**).

Isaac is clearly a type of the Messiah. Just as God the Father offered His only begotten son, Jesus Christ, to be sacrificed for our sins Abraham would have offered His son Isaac as a sacrifice had not God intervened.

Because of this powerful typological symbolism between Jesus and Isaac it seems logical that the site of the crucifixion of Jesus would be at or near the same place that Abraham intended to sacrifice Isaac. The Mount of Olives, because it is another mount Moriah in the land of Moriah (the area around Jerusalem) therefore becomes a very likely place that this event really did occur.



I'd like to quote again from "Secrets of Golgotha" where Ernest Martin brings out a few more interesting points regarding the offering of Isaac by Abraham and the many parallels between that event and the sacrifice of Jesus Christ:

Abraham was told to go to one of the mountains, not simply to any or all of the various mountains in the Moriah district. Abraham then saddled his donkey and took two of his young men with him along with Isaac his son (**Genesis 22:3**).

There is a major point to notice that is usually not observed by modern interpreters regarding this important event. We should carefully note that in Hebrew, the word which denotes "young men" is precisely the same word (though plural) of the Hebrew word for "lad" which described Isaac in **Genesis 22:5**. This shows that Isaac was no small child (or infant) when Abraham took him with the two young men on their journey to the Land of Moriah. Indeed, the same word for "lad" and "young men" was used to describe Joshua when he was 40 years of age (**Exodus 33:11**). Isaac could well have been in his 30's when the event concerning his intended sacrifice took place...

Another point needs to be made. Note that Abraham had been ordered by God to slay Isaac. He was his only begotten legal son through whom the promises of God that much glory would come from Isaac and not from other children that he had. But now, God was telling Abraham to slay his only legal son for inheritance.

Since Abraham was well aware of God's former promises to him that Abraham would have descendants to come from Isaac, the only conclusion Abraham could make if he did indeed kill Isaac was that God would have to resurrect Isaac from the dead for God's promises to be fulfilled. This is why Abraham said to the two young men who went with them to wait at the bottom of the mount and that he and Isaac (both of them together) would soon come again to them (**Genesis 22:5**).

The author of the Book of Hebrews used this very verse in Genesis to show that Abraham believed that Isaac would have to be resurrected from the dead if he did indeed slay him on the mount. Hebrews said: "Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him [Isaac] in a figure" (**Hebrews 11:19**).

So, from the author's point of view, Abraham (as a figure) did indeed slay his son when the substitute ram was offered in his place but he received his son Isaac back to life through a resurrection from the dead.

Abraham was assured that this would certainly happen even in a literal way (had God not provided the substitute sacrifice) because he confidently told the two young men who waited at the bottom of the mountain that both he and Isaac would come [plural] again to you (**Genesis 22:5**). This trial of Abraham's faith (and also the trial of Isaac's faith as well, because Isaac [may have been] around 30 years of age when this all happened) occurred on a mountain in the Land of Moriah...

Indeed, it was long recognized in Christian circles that Isaac was a type of the Christ who was to come so it was expected that several parallels between Isaac and Jesus would be apparent. And when one compares the history of Isaac with that of Jesus, the similarities are very profound.

Let us notice what some of those parallels were that prompted the early Christians to make the typical connection between Isaac and Jesus. Note the agreements.

(1) The birth of Isaac was miraculous (**Genesis 18**), so was the birth of Jesus (**Matthew 1:18**)...

(2) In Abraham's attempt to sacrifice Isaac, Isaac even assisted Abraham in carrying the wood to the altar (**Genesis 22:6**). In like manner Jesus also helped to carry his own crosspiece to his crucifixion.

(3) Isaac did not dispute Abraham's will in the matter of his own sacrifice, nor did Jesus with God the Father.

(4) Jesus and Isaac were both "offered" on the Mount of Olives. It is this parallel that makes the geographical information I am presenting in this book to be a valuable source for proper Christian interpretation.

(5) Isaac was willing to lay down his life of his own free will, just as Jesus did. Note that Isaac was younger and stronger than his father Abraham. No one knows the exact age of Isaac when this attempted "offering" occurred, but he was not a child. The word "lad" simply refers to a younger man as distinct from one of old age. Isaac could well have been just over 30 years of age, as was Jesus.

(6) Abraham also was willing to sacrifice his only son who was his only legal son (or legitimate son for inheritance) while God the Father did in fact give up his only begotten Son. As God provided a ram caught in the thicket as a substitute sacrifice for Isaac so that Isaac could live, New Testament teaching shows that the Father provided Jesus as a substitute sacrifice for Israel and the world so that they may live forever. This theme was well recognized in early Christian circles.

(7) Abraham came down from the mountain of sacrifice (which was the Mount of Olives) with Isaac still alive. The author of the book of Hebrews said that this was tantamount to Isaac having been resurrected from the dead (**Hebrews 11:17-19**). And similarly, Jesus was also resurrected (in a literal sense) at the same site and on the same mountain. And remember, Isaac had a three day journey to the spot to be "offered" and figuratively resurrected from the dead, while it is interesting that the resurrection of Jesus also took place after a period of three days (**Golgotha p.146-148, 158-159**).

Where Did the Jews Execute Criminals?

Both the Jewish religious authorities and the Romans had a hand in the execution of Jesus Christ. Before we look at the details of where Romans executed criminals let's look at where the Jews executed criminals. The following is from **John Keyser's article "Just Where in Jerusalem Did Our Savior Die?"** (<http://hope-of-israel.org/wherejer.htm>):

In **Numbers 15:35-36** we read that those deserving the death penalty had to be killed "OUTSIDE THE CAMP" of the Israelites. Notice:

"Then the Lord said to Moses, 'The man must surely be put to death; all the congregation shall STONE HIM with stones OUTSIDE THE CAMP.' So, as the Lord commanded Moses, all the congregation brought him OUTSIDE THE CAMP and STONED HIM with stones, and he died."

We have already determined that the limits of the "camp" were within a 3,000 foot or 2,000 cubit radius from the Court of the Sanhedrin on the Temple Mount. With this in mind, all we have to do is discover where - outside of this radius -- the place of execution was.

The Mishnah records that in the time of Christ there was a "place" for execution (or stoning), and this "place" was well known because the records (Sanhedrin 6:1-4) indicate that certain judicial matters were consummated at designated distances away from the Temple. Just WHERE was this "place" of execution? "Secrets of Golgotha" brings out an important principle:

"...all UNCLEAN things associated with the Temple, with Jerusalem or with the people of Israel (whether of animals or human beings) had to be disposed of EAST of sacred areas. Recall that the sin offerings killed in the Temple had to be taken EAST to the MIPHKAD ALTAR [altar of the Red Heifer] for burning to ashes (**Leviticus 4:1-21**). The bullock and the goat (both sin offerings) which were sacrificed on the Day of Atonement had to be taken EAST to the same altar and burnt into ashes (**Leviticus 16:27**). Even the live goat (the scapegoat) was led by a fit man into the wilderness EAST of Jerusalem (**Leviticus 16:20-22**). The sin offering called the Red Heifer was also burnt to ashes at the MIPHKAD ALTAR which, of course, was EAST of the Temple and Jerusalem.

"Even the ashes of all the sacrifices offered at the Altar of Burnt Offering in the Temple itself had to be taken EAST to the same "CLEAN PLACE" at the Miphkad Altar (**Leviticus 4:12**). Ashes to the early Jews were a symbol of sorrow and repentance and these had to be deposited EAST of Jerusalem in the area where the main animals bearing the sins of Israel were also burnt to ashes" (p.47).

All things considered to be "UNCLEAN" were taken EAST of the Holy City. Therefore, the site of execution for murderers and blasphemers (this was the charge against Christ - see **Mark 14:64**) had to be located in an area that would not affect the SACREDNESS AND PURITY of the HOLY CITY of Jerusalem! Doesn't that make sense? Note that ALL "unclean" things, including the major sin offerings laid down by God, were taken East of Jerusalem (the HOLY CITY) and the Temple itself.

In actual fact, in the theological thinking of the Jewish authorities in the first century, it was determined that EACH PERSON who committed a capital crime and was executed for his criminal act was RECKONED AS BEING A SIN OFFERING TO HIMSELF. It was believed that NO ANIMAL COULD TAKE THE PLACE of such a heinous person but that he (or she) had to be a SIN OFFERING himself (or herself) for the sins that had been committed. "May MY DEATH be an ATONEMENT for all my sins," said the one being executed (Cohen, Everyman's Talmud, p.317)...

Since the execution of the criminal was analogous to the sin offering, then the criminal had to be executed in the SAME AREA as the sin offerings -- outside the camp and EAST of the Temple near the summit of the MOUNT OF OLIVES!!

All those convicted under the Law of Moses and worthy of the death penalty were considered to have received the judgment of God; and the resulting execution was enacted in the "presence" of God -- on the side of the Temple that God faced, that is, THE EAST SIDE!

"Since the sanctuary was considered the house (or residence) of God on earth, and the mercy seat in the Holy of Holies was reckoned as the THRONE OF GOD, He was always depicted as sitting on His throne FACING EASTWARD where all the entrances of the Tabernacle were situated." (**Martin, Secrets of Golgotha, p.50**)...

How does this pertain to the death of Christ? Simply, this: "Since the New Testament makes it abundantly clear that Christ bore all the judgments for sin and that he endured the wrath of God in place of the whole world (**2 Corinthians 5:14-21**), it was necessary that Christ bear his judicial punishment in the area where 'all the world' is destined to be judged. For Christ to be executed 'IN THE PRESENCE OF GOD' for the sins of the world, he had to bear those sins IN THE REGION designed by God for that purpose." (**Secrets of Golgotha, p.51**)...

We have seen that during our Savior's time the OFFICIAL Jewish place for execution was "near the southern summit of Olivet but facing the EASTERN ENTRANCE to the Temple so that the evildoers would be executed "IN THE PRESENCE OF GOD." It has become abundantly clear that the only region in all of Jerusalem that fulfills all of the Mosaic requirements regarding the execution of criminals, is the area near the MIPHKAD ALTAR where the sacrifice of the Red Heifer took place. CHRIST WAS CRUCIFIED IN THIS SAME AREA!

Where Did the Romans Execute Criminals?

The following, quoted again from John Keyser's article "**Just Where in Jerusalem Did Our Savior Die?**" (<http://hope-of-israel.org/wherejer.htm>), shows that the place of Roman execution as applied to Jesus Christ was the same place on the Mount of Olives that was where the Jews executed criminals:

Roman records indicate that there were a number of ways to determine WHERE a malefactor was to be crucified. The first one is that criminals, particularly pirates or enemies of the state, must be executed AT THE SCENE OF THEIR CRIME. (Digest 48:9.19.28.15; cf. Collectio Legum Nosaicarum et Romanarum, I.6). Notice some examples:

"...he crucified the soldiers in the spot WHERE THEY HAD COMMITTED THEIR CRIMES. ('Scriptores Historiae Augustae' 6, Vulcarius Gallicanus, 'Avidius Cassius,' 4:1f). The proconsul of Africa punished the priests of Saturn 'by crucifying them ON THE VERY TREES of their temple, in the shadow of which they had COMMITTED THEIR CRIMES' (Tertullian, 'Apologeticus,' 9:2). In 'Chaereas ad Callirhoe' we read: 'A great proportion of the crowd followed Theron as he was led away, and in front of Callirhoe's tomb he was crucified upon the cross, and from the cross gazed out upon the sea OVER WHICH HE HAD CARRIED CAPTIVE the daughters of Heromcrates.' (Chariton, 3:4:18).

"Secondly, if it was not possible to return the malefactor to the site of his crime, then the PLACE WHERE HE WAS ARRESTED was acceptable. We find an example of this in the Acts of Pilate: 'According to the law of the pious emperors...hanged on the cross in the garden IN WHICH YOU WERE SEIZED.'" (IX.5).

Now, if either of these two possibilities was untenable, it was common to select an AREA OF HIGH GROUND or a BUSY CROSSROADS for the crucifixion. This was to provide a visible deterrent to the people passing by not to commit such crimes. And since this form of death represented the ultimate form of humiliation for the criminal, his naked body had to be on public display in a prominent location. This is verified by Quintilian: "The crowded roads are chosen...penalties relate not so much to retribution as to their EXEMPLARY EFFECT" (Declamationes, 274). In Alexander Severus we read: "As a deterrent to others he had them crucified on the street that his slaves used most frequently." (23:8).

DO YOU REALIZE CHRIST FULFILLED ALL OF THESE REQUIREMENTS?

Where was Christ arrested? In the Garden of Gethsemane! And where was this garden located? Prof. J.A. Thompson explains:

"The site of Gethsemane is not known with certainty, although it was across the Kidron Valley on the SIDE OF THE MOUNT OF OLIVES. There are today several rival sites for the place. The confused visitor will be shown the scene by the Roman Catholics, the Greeks, the Armenians, and the Russians. The oldest tradition places the scene [of Christ's praying] on the ground now occupied by the Tomb of the Virgin" (The Bible and Archaeology, third ed. 1982. Pages 356-360).

Since the Roman army stripped the area surrounding Jerusalem of all trees during the siege of the Holy City (**70 A.D.** and just prior), it is difficult to identify the exact location of the Garden of Gethsemane.

However, the New Testament clearly states that it was on the Mount of Olives where Christ was arrested. Following the Last Supper (or Seder) Matthew states that "Jesus went with his disciples to a PLACE CALLED GETHSEMANE..." (**Matthew 26:36**). And WHERE was Gethsemane? Luke provides the answer: "Jesus went out AS USUAL to the MOUNT OF OLIVES, and his disciples followed him" (**Luke 22:39**). This is verified by John: "When he had finished praying, Jesus left with his disciples and CROSSED THE KIDRON VALLEY. On the other side [on the Mount of Olives] there was an olive grove, and he and his disciples went into it" (**John 18:1**).

Whatever the EXACT location of the garden, the New Testament reveals that Christ was arrested on the MOUNT OF OLIVES; and we have just seen that Roman custom was to crucify a criminal AT THE PLACE OF HIS ARREST!

Furthermore, the Garden of Gethsemane was also the SCENE OF A "CRIME"! Notice **Luke 22**:

"He [Jesus] said to them, 'But now if you have a purse, take it, and also a bag; and if you don't have a SWORD, sell your cloak and buy one. It is written: 'And he was numbered with the transgressors'; and I tell you that this must be fulfilled in me. Yes, what is written about me is reaching its fulfillment.' The disciples said, 'See, Lord, here are TWO SWORDS.' 'That is enough,' he replied" (**Luke 22:36-38**).

Christ always forbade the carrying of weapons by His disciples; but when He was arrested in the Garden of Gethsemane they had at least two swords in their possession. Why? To make Christ appear as though He were indeed a "criminal," and by so doing the Garden became the "scene of a crime" -- the crime of SEDITION against the Roman authorities.

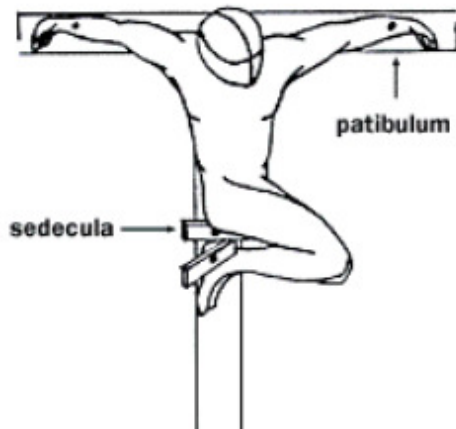
We must also realize that there was a more serious charge against Christ than that of sedition -- TREASON!

Christ allowed Himself to be proclaimed king at the time of His triumphal entry into Jerusalem on what is now known as "Palm Sunday." And WHERE did He allow this to occur? ON THE MOUNT OF OLIVES! Notice what Mark says:

"As they approached Jerusalem and came to Bethphage and Bethany AT THE MOUNT OF OLIVES, Jesus sent two of His disciples, saying to them, 'Go to the village ahead of you, and just as you enter it, you will find a colt tied there, which NO ONE has ever ridden. Untie it and bring it here'...When they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks over it, he sat on it. Many people spread their cloaks on the road, while others spread branches they had cut in the fields. Those who went ahead and those who followed shouted, 'Hosanna!' Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Blessed is the COMING KINGDOM OF OUR FATHER DAVID!" (Mark 11:1-2, 7-10).

Christ left no stone unturned to ensure that His death would occur AT THE SCENE of His alleged criminal acts!

The final requirement according to Roman Law was also met. He was put to death at a PROMINENT LOCATION for all to see. At that time of year, just prior to the Passover, the road leading into the EAST GATE of the Temple from the villages of Bethphage and Bethany, was probably the busiest in all of Jerusalem. Countless numbers of people were passing by with their Passover lambs under their arms or over their shoulders as they headed to the Temple for the ritual slaughter.



Can you picture the scene? The very Passover lambs that PICTURED the very PASSOVER LAMB Himself passed by Him on the road to the Temple as He hung there sacrificing Himself for those very same people who were carrying them! What incredible fulfillment; what a mind-boggling scene when you understand what happened on that afternoon almost 2,000 years ago!

Christ MADE SURE that the Romans would have no reason whatsoever to crucify Him at any other location but right there on the slopes of the Mount of Olives where He committed His "crimes" and was arrested.

Christ, at His death, FULFILLED ALL OF THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE ROMAN LAW!!

The Tearing of the Temple Curtain

A clue that helps us to identify the true site of Jesus's crucifixion is that those who watched His crucifixion could see the tearing of the Temple curtain in half. I quote again from John Keyser's excellent article "**Just Where in Jerusalem Did Our Savior Die?**" (<http://hope-of-israel.org/wherejer.htm>):

What is the CORRECT SITE of the death and burial of our Savior? The gospel of Luke affords a clue:

"It was now about the sixth hour and, with the sun eclipsed, a darkness came over the whole land until the ninth hour. THE VEIL OF THE TEMPLE WAS TORN RIGHT

DOWN THE MIDDLE; and when Jesus had cried out in a loud voice, he said, 'Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.' With these words he breathed his last. WHEN THE CENTURION SAW WHAT HAD TAKEN PLACE, he gave praise to God and said, 'This was a great and good man.' And when all the people who has gathered for the spectacle SAW WHAT HAPPENED, they went home beating their breasts. All his friends stood at a distance; so also did the women who had accompanied him from Galilee, AND THEY SAW ALL THIS HAPPEN" (Luke 23:44-49).

What was it that caused the centurion present to praise God? What did the people gathered there see that caused them to head for their homes beating their breasts - the sign of extreme humiliation, distress and grief? What was it His friends saw? It wasn't the death of Christ, the centurion was there to oversee Christ's death - that was the expected outcome. It was NOT our Savior's last breath that caused the people to beat their breasts, they also were there to witness His death. WHAT was it that all these people saw that affected them so dramatically? THE TEARING OF THE TEMPLE CURTAIN!

Notice what Matthew says:

"Again Jesus cried out with a loud voice and yielded up his spirit. And BEHOLD [TO HAVE IN SIGHT, SEE], THE CURTAIN OF THE HOLY PLACE WAS RENT IN TWO FROM TOP TO BOTTOM, and the earth quaked and the masses of rocks were split...But the centurion and the others with him watching Jesus having SEEN the earthquake AND THE THINGS OCCURRING, became very much afraid, saying: 'Truly, this was God's son.'" (Matthew 27:50, 51, 54).

What was it the centurion and the others saw? The earthquake and "THE THINGS OCCURRING." And what were these "things occurring"? The death of Christ AND THE TEARING OF THE TEMPLE CURTAIN!



The gospel of Mark makes this point even clearer: "But Jesus having let out a loud voice died. And the curtain of the Holy Place was rent in two from top to bottom. But the centurion standing alongside and opposite of him HAVING SEEN that he expired THUSLY [that is, He died at the exact time the curtain tore in two], said: 'Truthfully, this man was a Son of God.'" (Mark 15:37-39).

It is absolutely clear that those who were gathered around Christ as He hung on the tree SAW THE CURTAIN TEAR at the time of His death.

THE ONLY PLACE IN THE ENTIRETY OF JERUSALEM WHERE THE TEMPLE CURTAIN COULD BE SEEN FROM, AND A PLACE THAT WAS "OUTSIDE THE CAMP," WAS THE SLOPES OF THE MOUNT OF OLIVES!

Why? Because the Temple was aligned in an east-west direction, with the HUGE curtain (80 feet tall and 24 feet in breadth) hanging in the EASTERN portal of the inner Temple.

The crucifixion had to have taken place NEAR THE SUMMIT of the Mount of Olives because this was the ONLY AREA in all of the city and environs where the curtain of the Temple could be seen from, and where the "camp" ended (3,000 feet from the Court of the Sanhedrin on the Temple Mount). The 3,000 feet ended JUST SHY of the summit!

This HUGE curtain was eight stories high held aloft by a massive stone lintel. It is more than likely that the earthquake caused a split in the lintel. Half of the lintel hung on while the other half crashed to the ground ripping the Temple curtain as it fell.

In **Matthew 27:50** we read:

"Again Jesus cried out with a loud voice and yielded up his spirit. And behold the curtain of **the holy place** [NOT the Most Holy Place or Holy of holies] was rent in two from top to bottom".

The curtain is only connected here with the Holy place, not the Holy of holies here. There was an outer curtain that hung above the doors into the Holy Place and was held aloft by a massive stone lintel eight stories high. This outer curtain was the curtain that was torn from top to bottom. This tearing of this curtain symbolised God giving us access to the Holy Place as we become a royal priesthood (**1 Peter 2:9**).

There was also an inner curtain that separated the Holy Place from the Holy of holies where God symbolically resided. The gospels are silent as to whether this curtain was simultaneously torn at the same time as the outer curtain was torn in two though my guess is that it probably was.

In **Hebrews 10:19-20** we read:

Therefore brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus by a new and living way which He consecrated for us **through the veil, that is, His flesh.**

The inner curtain before the Holy of holies is equated here with the flesh of Jesus Christ which was broken for us.

The combination of the tearing of the outer curtain or veil and the tearing or breaking of Christ's body for our sin symbolised the barrier between man and God was broken down for those who accepted the sacrifice of Jesus Christ and we can now have direct access to the Father.

Where was the Place of the Skull?

In the gospel accounts we are told that the place of the crucifixion was called the Place of the Skull or Golgotha as it is in Aramaic.

They came to a place called Golgotha (which means The Place of the Skull) (**Matthew 27:33**).

Carrying his own cross, he went out to The Place of the Skull (which in Aramaic is called Golgotha) (**John 19:17**).

In the Old Testament the Hebrew word "Golgotha" is used and is translated as "skull" in two places (**Judges 9:53; 2 Kings 9:35**), the human "head" once (**1 Chronicles 10:10**) and nine times it denotes "poll" or "head-count."

The Miphkad altar on the Mount of Olives gets its name from being the place where censuses were done and Miphkad means numbering. Golgotha means place of the head i.e. where head counting or numbering was done.

Not only was the Mount of the Olives the place where censuses or head counts were taken in Jerusalem, which is one reason it was called Golgotha, but according to tradition it was also the burial place of a particular head or skull. John Keyser tells us the following in his article "**Just Where in Jerusalem Did Our Savior Die?**" (<http://hope-of-israel.org/wherejer.htm>):

Is it just possible this small hillock on the Mount of Olives was called The Place of THE Skull because it was the burial place of A PARTICULAR SKULL?

Let's see what history and tradition reveal: "It was an EARLY TRADITION that Christ was crucified IN THE SAME PLACE WHERE ADAM WAS BURIED. S. Chrysostom alludes to it. 'Some say that Adam died there, and there lieth, and that Jesus, in that place where death had reigned, there also set up the trophy.'" (The Cross in Tradition, History, and Art, by William Wood Seymour. P.99).

Tentzelius' "Numial Treatise," quoted in Southey's "Omniana," vol.i.,p.281, records this amazing episode in ancient history: "The tree [of life], WITH THE BONES OF ADAM, was preserved in the ark by Noah, who divided the relics among his sons. THE SKULL FELL TO THE SHARE OF SHEM [Noah's son], WHO BURIED IT IN A MOUNT OF JUDEA CALLED FROM THIS CIRCUMSTANCE CALVARY AND GOLGOTHA [THE PLACE OF THE SKULL]."

Isn't that remarkable? In early art Adam is frequently shown as rising up (from the grave) at the very foot of the cross, holding a chalice or cup to catch the blood of Christ as it fell from the tortured body. Many paintings or drawings of the crucifixion scene show THE SKULL OF ADAM beneath the stauros or cross of Christ.

With this newly discovered knowledge it's easy to see WHY the site of Christ's death was called Golgotha -- THE PLACE OF THE (ADAM'S) SKULL!!

This belief that Adam's skull was buried at Golgotha was common in the early church. Origen speaks of it as well known in his time; and St. Augustine wrote: "The ancients hold that because Adam was the first man, and was buried there [at Golgotha], it was called Calvary, because it holds the HEAD of the human race." (De Civitate Dei, cap.32).

St. Basil said, "Probably Noah was not ignorant of the sepulchre of our forefather [Adam] and that of the first born of all mortals, and in that place, CALVARY, the Lord suffered, the origin of death there being destroyed." (Isa. cap.5).

The fact that this spot outside Jerusalem is called The Place of THE Skull in the gospels, would tend to support the tradition of Shem having buried Adam's skull there.

According to Dr. Martin:

"In the Hebrew language this highest summit of Olivet was known as the 'Bamah.' It was the 'high place' on the Mount of Olives and this is where King David went to worship God overlooking the city of Jerusalem to the WEST...Indeed, this highest point on the southern summit of Olivet became known as the IMBOMON (which comes from the Greek "en bommo" which means "high place" or "altar")...At the present there is a small Moslem shrine built over the site" (**Secrets of Golgotha, p.61-62**)

The Place of the City

We are given another clue to the location for Christ's crucifixion in John's account. I quote again from John Keyser:

There is even more evidence for this location of the crucifixion:

"Therefore many of the Jews read this title, because the place where Jesus was impaled was NEAR THE PLACE OF THE CITY [original Greek]; and it was written in Hebrew, in Latin, in Greek" (**John 19:20**).

What was this "place of the city" John was talking about? We can find the answer to this if we take the Greek word for "place" (TOPOS) and see where and how it occurs in other scriptures. Notice **Acts 6:13-14**:

"And they brought forward false witnesses, who said: 'This man does not stop speaking things against this HOLY TOPOS and against the Law. For instance, we have heard him say that this Jesus the Nazarene will throw down this TOPOS and change the customs that Moses handed down to us.'

The word 'topos' can only refer to the TEMPLE! And again, in **Acts 21**:

"Men of Israel, help us. This is the man who teaches everywhere against the People, and the Law, and THE TOPOS, and what is more, he has brought Greeks into the temple [enclosure] and defiled THE HOLY TOPOS" (**verse 28**)...

Let Ernest L. Martin explain:

"These scriptures show that the common designation for the Temple and its holy areas was 'The Place' (i.e. The Topos). There was absolutely nothing strange to the Jews of the first century in using such a name for the Temple. There are a host of references from the Old Testament (both in Hebrew AND Greek), and from other Jewish works as well as from Gentile accounts which show that the expression 'The Topos' meant the Temple in Jerusalem.

"The phrase was also used to refer to Gentile sanctuaries throughout the world (see Kittel's Theological Dictionary, vol.VIII, pp.187-208 for many such references). In the middle of the fourth century, Athanasius simply called the Temple at Jerusalem 'the Place' (The Topos) without the slightest elaboration. 'Aliens had invaded the Temple at Jerusalem.... Aliens indeed had held THE PLACE, but know not the LORD OF THE PLACE....What profit then is THE PLACE to them? For behold they that hold THE PLACE are charged by them that love God with making it [the Place] a den of thieves' (Letter XXIX, fragment)" (**Secrets of Golgotha, p.22**).

Christ died EAST OF THE "PLACE," OUTSIDE OF THE CAMP -- in other words, just **below the summit of the Mount of Olives and DIRECTLY EAST of the Temple**

curtain (Just Where in Jerusalem Did Our Savior Die?" - <http://hope-of-israel.org/wherejer.htm>).

He was crucified near the place of the city i.e. near the Temple. While the Mount of Olives southern summit was 2000 feet away from the Temple (similar to the Catholic and Protestant preferred locations) it was very near to the Miphkad altar which, in one sense, was considered part of the Temple complex.

Location of the Places of Christ's Trial

Traditionally it is thought that the location of the houses of Annas, the High Priest Caiaphas and the Sanhedrin hall were located at different sites away from the Temple, either on the SW hill or in the lower city in the Tyropoean Valley. A proper understanding of Jewish records and the gospel accounts show that the location of these three places were all WITHIN the Temple.

Furthermore Pilate was situated relatively close to the Temple being located in the Fort Antonia where the Dome of the Rock stands. Ernest Martin writes the following about the location of the places of Jesus Christ's trial before the Jews and the Romans:

The High Priest actually had more than one residence in Jerusalem. While it can be reasonably reckoned that he had a sumptuous home in the aristocratic region of Jerusalem on the southwest hill, he also had at least two other residences within the Temple itself in which he had to live at certain times of the year or when special sacrifices were offered...

In addition to his normal house (or palace) on the southwest hill, it was necessary for the High Priest to have this home or official house within the Temple enclosure in order to perform certain ceremonies demanded in the Mosaic law. Such a separate residence was required when each High Priest was consecrated. It was demanded in the Law that he stay seven days within the Temple and near the Holy Place (**Leviticus 8:33**). There were other times when this was necessary. Josephus (who himself was a priest) stated that the High Priest resided in the Temple over the ceremonies of the Sabbath, the new moons, "and on any national festival or annual assemblage of all the people" (**Wars of the Jews, V.230**).

Since the trial of Jesus took place at the time of Passover, there can be no doubt that Caiaphas (along with his deputy Annas) were then away from their ordinary homes (or houses) and they were then resident in the Upper Chambers within the Temple adjacent to the Chamber of Hewn Stones where the Sanhedrin met.

As a matter of fact, we have New Testament evidence that the "House of Caiaphas" at the time of Jesus' trial was his "Temple House" and not his regular one on the southwest hill. Note that when false witnesses accused Jesus at Caiaphas' House they said: "We heard him say I will throw down THIS Temple that was made with hands and in three days I will build another not made with hands" (**Mark 14:58**). It is important to realize that they did not say "the Temple," as though it was situated at a distance from them. They referred to it as "this Temple," which means they were then situated within the Temple complex itself...

In the Mishnah (the earliest part of the Talmud), it states that the residence of the High Priest was at or near the "Wood Chamber" located west of the Chamber of Hewn Stones (Mid. 5:4) and next to the House of Abtinas (sometimes spelled Avtinas) where the incense was prepared for the Temple services. It was in the Upper Chamber of this "Temple House" that it is believed the House of the High Priest was

located when he lived in his official residence upon the Temple Mount (Ency.Judaica, vol.III.991).

These "Houses" of the priests abutting to the Chamber of Hewn Stones (the Sanhedrin) were built on the second story around and above a courtyard of columns below. Remarkably, the New Testament states specifically that Jesus was taken into the Upper Chamber of the High Priest's house while Peter had to stay below near the vestibule of the courtyard (**Mark 14:66**). This answers precisely to the description of the second story residences for the High Priest (and other priestly dignitaries) which the Mishnah shows were supported by columns over a courtyard...

The Book of Acts tells us that Stephen was led "into the Sanhedrin" (**Acts 6:12**). While there, false witnesses were brought in who said: "This man does not stop speaking against THIS Holy Place and against the law. For example, we have heard him say that this Jesus the Nazarene will throw down THIS Place and change the customs that Moses handed down to us" (**Acts 6:13-14**). Clearly, these statements show that the accusers of Stephen, who were then within the official chambers of the Sanhedrin, were still located in THIS Holy Place [the Temple complex itself]. They did not say, simply, "the Temple," as one would expect if they were then situated somewhere away from the Temple. The truth is, they were still meeting within the Temple complex when Stephen was tried before the Sanhedrin...

Capital judgments made in the Sanhedrin were rendered (ideally) on the east side of the Temple, and why criminals condemned to die were executed near the top of the Mount of Olives in order for them to be a "sacrifice of atonement" for themselves "in the presence of God." Thus, Jesus was judged and executed "in the presence of God" so that the Old Testament requirements could be satisfied. In both his judgment and his execution, the action was carried out by the Sanhedrin east of the Holy Place in the Temple.

But the sentence of the Sanhedrin did not end the matter. There was still the Roman authorities that had to be consulted. It was then necessary to take Jesus to Pilate, the Roman representative, for his approval of the judgment. In what region of Jerusalem was Pilate at the time? Was he then in the Palace that Herod built on the southwestern hill or was he among the majority of his troops which would have been at the fortress called the Antonia [just north of the Temple]? The Fortress of Antonia (named after Mark Antony by Herod) has by far the best credentials. There are good reasons to believe that it was to this Praetorium that Jesus was brought to be finally judged by Pilate...

In Jerusalem, Jesus must have been taken to the Roman Imperial Praetorium at Fort Antonia, rather than the former Herod's Praetorium located at Herod's palace which would have been more parochial in authority.

This can be shown in several ways. It would have been unwise for any Roman commander to be anywhere else but the Antonia next to the Temple itself when there were thousands upon thousands of Jews assembling in the Temple for their national holy periods.

While it was normal for Roman leaders to live in Herod's Palace on the southwest hill (as shown by Josephus in **Wars of the Jews II. 325-329**), at the times of the Jewish annual festivals it was customary for the Roman commander to take up residence with his main body of troops at the Antonia adjacent to the Temple. This is what Cumanus, the commander of Judaea who ruled in the middle of the first century, did at the time of Passover (**Wars of the Jews II. 223-227**).

There can hardly be a doubt that Pilate (at the time of Jesus) did the same thing. It should be noted that Pilate's wife sent him a message about a dream she had. This would have been unnecessary had Pilate been with his wife that night (**Matthew 27:19**). Pilate was clearly away from his ordinary living quarters at the time. At that

Passover season he was where "the whole army" was stationed (**Matthew 27:27**). This is a description that favors the Antonia.

Note also that the Jews did not want to enter into the Praetorium where Pilate was in fear of becoming impure and unfit to take the Passover (**John 18:28**). This fear of impurity would fit the Antonia far more than Herod's Palace. The truth is, the Antonia was really a "city" in itself and it was a Gentile...The only restriction against taking the Passover for Jews was to come in contact with a dead body (**Numbers 9:6-12**).

Unless there was someone who had recently died (and was lying in state) in Herod's Palace, there would have been no restriction whatever to prevent the Jews from eating the Passover that they could not have overcome by simply washing themselves before sundown (Edersheim, *Life and Times*, vol.11, pp.556, 557). But the Antonia was a very different place. It was virtually a large "Gentile town." Such places would ordinarily have had some dead bodies within them who were either waiting to be buried or cremated (**Golgotha, p.114-116, 114, 119, 122-124**).

Geographically the trial of Jesus began within the Temple. It started at the house of Annas, then moved to the house of the High Priest Caiaphas and then, when it was daylight, He was finally sentenced to death by the Jews. The Jewish trial occurred wholly within the Temple.

After He was judged by the Sanhedrin the trial moved from the Temple situated on the SE spur above the Gihon spring north to the massive Roman Fort Antonia which covered the whole "Temple Mount" enclosure where the Dome of the Rock stands today. Pilate then sent him to Herod when he found out that Jesus was a Galilean. Herod was probably situated at Herod's palace on the SW hill.

Herod then sent him back to Pilate back at Fort Antonia where he Pilate reluctantly sentenced him to death by crucifixion. He was then led out with the priests following him to the place on the Mount of Olives where Jews were stoned to death near the Miphkad altar and then crucified.

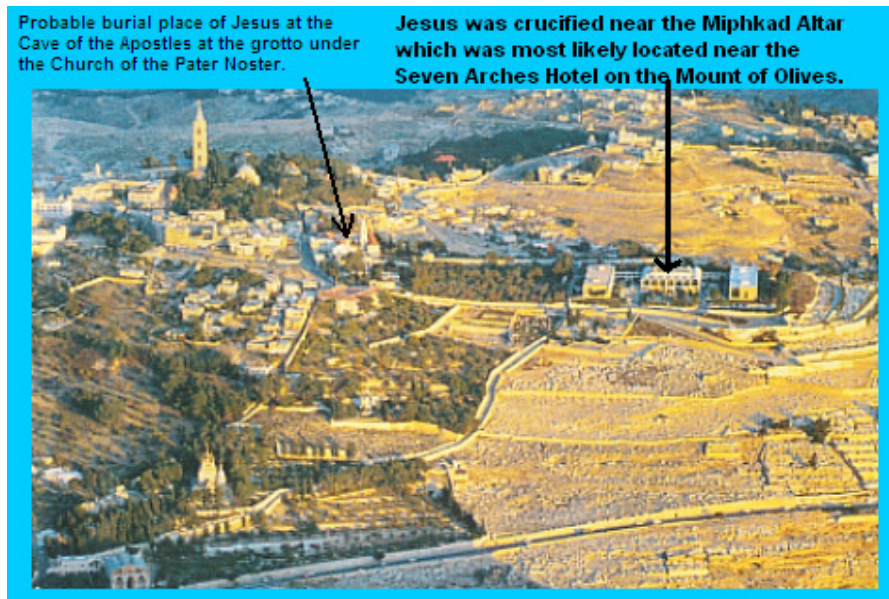
The Importance of the Mount of Olives to the First Century Church

The Mount of Olives had great importance to the early Church of God. We have already seen it as being a strong contender for being the mount of the land of Moriah (Jerusalem region) where Abraham offered Isaac. It was the place where the Shekinah Glory retreated to from the Temple before the Temple was destroyed by the Babylonians. According to Josephus the same thing happened at the time of the destruction of the Herodian Temple by the Romans in 70 AD. The Shekinah Glory also retreated to the Mount of Olives.

It was the location of where Jesus habitually resided when He was in the Jerusalem area and gave many teachings. It was the place of His ascension and it will be the place where He returns to earth at His second coming.

We have also built a strong case for it being the place of Jesus Christ's crucifixion. We have in the apocryphal work "The Acts of John" this direct statement supporting the other historical evidence we have built up showing Jesus was crucified on the Mount of Olives:

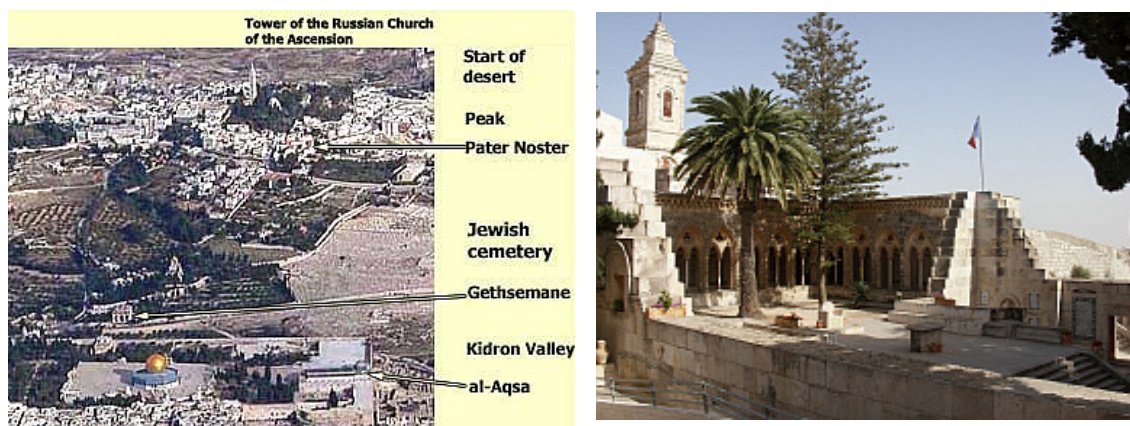
"Jesus said to John on the MOUNT OF OLIVES at the moment of the crucifixion: 'John, someone must hear this from me; for I have need of one who will hear it'" (The New Testament Apocrypha, Vol.I, p.301).



Jesus was buried by Joseph of Arimathea in a nearby tomb. As we will see in the next set of quotes from Ernest Martin this tomb was a cave and this cave became very highly regarded by Christians in the time before Constantine who later diverted attention away from it to his new Church of the Holy Sepulchre. Writes Ernest Martin:

The location of the cave on the Mount of Olives, however, had been so ingrained as significant to Christians at Jerusalem that Helena was forced to erect a church over the Olivet cave. She called her structure the Eleona Church which indicated that it was situated on the Mount of Olives. (*Golgotha* p.165-166).

The Eleona Church built atop of the grotto cave was later destroyed by the Persians in **614 AD**. Centuries later the Crusaders built another church on top of the same site under which lies some of the original grotto. That church, which remains there to this day, is called the Church of the Pater Noster and underneath it is the cave where the tomb of Christ originally was. It is very close to the southern summit of the Mount of Olives where Jesus was crucified.



The following quotes from Ernest Martin show the evidence supporting the fact that the tomb of Christ was located on the Mount of Olives and how the Mount of Olives became a new "Mount Zion" for early Christians:

What is not usually recognized even by many Christian people today is the fact that the area of the Mount of Olives was where Jesus actually lived when he was in the vicinity of Jerusalem. Not only was the region his "habitual" place for meeting with his apostles (**Luke 22:39**), and "where he many times met there with his disciples" (**John 18:2**), but "by day he was teaching in the Temple, but by night he would go out and lodge on the Mount of Olives" (**Luke 21:37**). Even the village of Bethany where, he sometimes resided was on the eastern slopes of this same Mount of Olives (**Mark 11:1**). Jesus' home in Jerusalem was on Olivet.

It could be rightly said that the district of the Mount of Olives was the "home" of Jesus when he was in Jerusalem. Other than the time he taught in the Temple or the occasion of the Last Supper (which took place within the city of Jerusalem), all the other teachings of Jesus near Jerusalem were conducted on the Mount of Olives...

It was customary in Jewish circles to call the Mount of Olives by the name "the Mount of the Anointing" (Parah 3:6) [The olives produced there were used for anointing oil]. If one use the Greek language to translate this Hebrew rendering, it is quite a significant sign of identification. Through the Greek the Mount of Olives would be called "the Mount of the Christ [Anointed One]." Christians were well aware of this significance. When Jesus was in the Jerusalem area it was on the Mount of Olives that he made his abode (**Mark 11:1; Luke 21:37; 22:39; John 18:2**). Olivet was truly "his" mount.

There were other things that made it "the Mount of the Anointing (Christ)." The Mount of Olives was also the holiest area around Jerusalem other than the Temple itself. I have explained the reason for this in previous chapters. We should recall that the Mount of Olives had its special sanctification because it housed the Miphkad Altar (where the Red Heifer and the other sin offerings were burnt outside the camp). But to Christians it had even a greater anointing. More significant than anything else, it was the area where Jesus was crucified, buried and resurrected from the dead. It was also near the place of Jesus' ascension, and the site to which he will return from heaven (**Acts 1:9-11; Zechariah 14:1-4**)...

In the period before Constantine it is not difficult to see why Christians from around the world would pay attention to the Mount of Olives as a place of special holiness. What may be surprising to some of us is the fact that they paid particular attention to the cave very near the summit of Olivet and located about a hundred yards to the south and a little west of the monticulus "the little hill on the mountain" that the Bordeaux Pilgrim described. But why a cave ? This may at first seem puzzling because there is not the slightest mention of such a cave in the Gospels nor in any place in the New Testament. That's right, there is no attention attached to any cave, but there is considerable importance shown to a TOMB - the tomb of Jesus from whence he came forth from the dead!

Could the cave on the Mount of Olives have been the tomb of Jesus? There is every reason to believe that it was!...In the work called "The Gospel of the Nazaraeans" (written in the second century) it was said that a guard of armed soldiers sent to the tomb of Jesus were set "over against THE CAVE" (Hennecke Schneemelcher, The New Testament Apocrypha, vol.I, p.150). This record shows that even the tomb itself was already reckoned as a cave at the time that Jesus was placed in it. But there is more.

In the late second or early third century work called "The Acts of Pilate," Jesus' burial place was called both a tomb and a cave in the same context. That work has Joseph of Arimathea saying: "See, I have placed it [the body of Jesus] in my NEW TOMB,

having wrapped it in clean linen, and I rolled a stone before the door OF THE CAVE' (**Acts of Pilate, Bk.XII**). The sepulchre for Jesus was both a "new tomb" and a "cave" at the same time. And there is more that shows this. In "The Acts of Pilate," the tomb of Jesus is called a cave. "And we saw an angel descend from heaven, and he rolled away the stone from the mouth of THE CAVE' (**Acts of Pilate, Bk.XIII**)...

But there is even more important information to suggest this than the second and third century works mentioned above. This comes from the New Testament itself. Note that when Lazarus (the brother of Mary and Martha) died, the Gospel of John states that they placed him in a memorial tomb. The Greek word to denote that memorial tomb of Lazarus was precisely the same one that described the sepulchre (or memorial tomb) of Jesus. But with Lazarus, the New Testament gives us a further bit of information about his memorial tomb. It says it was also A CAVE.

Notice what the New Testament states; "Jesus therefore again, groaning in himself, cometh to the GRAVE [memorial tomb]. It was A CAVE, and a stone lay upon it" (**John 11:38**). Interestingly, the same type of memorial tomb (or sepulchre) of Jesus also had a stone which covered its entrance. And even more to the point, the tomb/cave of Lazarus was located on the same Mount of Olives as was the tomb of Jesus, only Lazarus was laid to rest on the east side of the mountain while Jesus was entombed on its west side...

But this is not all the important information about this cave on the Mount of Olives. It should be recalled that the church historian Eusebius (who was himself a native Palestinian and well versed in the history of Jerusalem as well as an astute observer of what was happening in Christian circles at the end of the third century) said that Christians were coming to Jerusalem from all over the world to assemble at the cave on the Mount of Olives in order to worship God.

"Believers in Jesus all congregate from all parts of the world ... that they may worship at the Mount of Olives opposite the city ... TO THE CAVE that is shown there" (**Proof of the Gospel, Bk. VI. ch. 18**)...



Eusebius was consistent in stating that Christians acknowledged the Mount of Olives as the new Mount Sion. This did not mean that the original "Mount Sion" of the Bible was lost sight of. There was never any doubt where the real Mount Sion was. It was on the southeast hill of Jerusalem...These historical facts are found in one of Eusebius' early works (written several years before **A.D.325**). It is called the *Demonstratio Evangelica* (or in English, Proof of the Gospel).

In this work, Eusebius records that after the destruction of Jerusalem in **A.D. 70**, the "spiritual" headquarters of the Ekklesia of God [the the word Ekklesia is usually translated "Church"] came to be established on the Mount of Olives. A church building was constructed on this mount and it was called the "Mother Church" (the foundational Ekklesia) for all Christendom. The information concerning these matters comes directly from Eusebius in this pre-Constantine work. It is surprising that scholars over the centuries (as far as I am able to determine) have not referred to these important early opinions of Eusebius...

"The Mount of Olives is therefore literally opposite to Jerusalem and to the east of it, but also THE HOLY CHURCH OF GOD, and the mount UPON WHICH IT WAS FOUNDED, of which the Saviour teaches: A city set on a hill cannot be hid, RAISED UP IN PLACE OF JERUSALEM that is fallen never to rise again, and thought worthy of the feet of the Lord, is figuratively not only opposite Jerusalem, but east of it as well, receiving the rays of the divine light, and become much before Jerusalem [in prominence], and near the Sun of Righteousness himself" **(Proof of the Gospel, VI.18)...**

Note that he did not say that the Church of the Holy Sepulchre built by Constantine was the foundation Church (as one would expect if that area was truly where Jesus was crucified and resurrected from the dead). No, to Eusebius the Holy Church Of God "was founded on the Mount of Olives." Most significantly, Eusebius made this remarkable historical observation several years before Constantine and his mother Helena came on the scene to insist by visions, dreams and supposed miracles that Christendom was really founded in the direct opposite direction from Olivet...

Eusebius said the Scriptures "tell of a new Mount, and the righteousness of ANOTHER HOUSE OF GOD, besides the one in Jerusalem" **(Proof of the Gospel, 11.3).**

What was established on the Mount of Olives was a type of new city (that was later compared to the city set on a hill that Jesus spoke about) which was raised up instead of the old Jerusalem. Eusebius is consistent with this theme.

"And this Mount of Olives is said to be over against Jerusalem, because it was established by God after the fall of Jerusalem, INSTEAD OF THE OLD EARTHLY JERUSALEM" **(Proof of the Gospel, VI. 18).**

"And this Mount of Olives is said to be over against Jerusalem, instead of the old earthly Jerusalem and its worship ... believers in Christ congregate from all parts of the world ... that they may worship at the Mount of Olives opposite the city ... TO THE CAVE that is shown there" **(Proof of the Gospel,, V1. 18)...**

The only area of interest to pre-Constantinian pilgrims, as far as this early evidence of Eusebius is concerned, was the cave on the Mount of Olives. And in this period the Mount of Olives was also being called the Christian "Mount Sion." Even the Jewish authorities were calling it "the Mount of the Anointing (the Christ)." This fact is made even clearer by Eusebius when he referred to the law going forth from Mount Sion in **Isaiah 2:2-4**. He gave the Christian interpretation of that prophecy in **Proof of the Gospel, Book I, Chapter 4**. He showed that the new Mount Sion was Olivet!

"This law going forth from Sion, different from the law enacted in the desert by Moses on Mount Sinai, what can it be but the word of the Gospel, going forth from Sion through our Saviour Jesus Christ, and going through all nations? For it is plain, that it was in Jerusalem AND MOUNT SION ADJACENT THERETO (where our Lord and Saviour for the most part lived and taught) that the law of the new covenant began and from THENCE went forth and shone upon all, according to the commands which he gave his disciples when he said: 'Go ye, and make disciples of all nations, teaching them to observe all things, whatsoever I have commanded you'."

Though the command of Jesus that Eusebius quotes was given in Galilee (**Matthew 28:16-20**), no one ever thought that the Mount Sion of the New Covenant was located that far north. This new Mount Sion of Eusebius was near Jerusalem. Indeed, he made the plain statement (shown in the above quote) that this new Mount Sion was "ADJACENT" to the city of Jerusalem. That's right. It was a mount that was adjacent to the city of Jerusalem, but it was not a part of the actual city. This is precisely the description that Eusebius used to describe the geographical position of the Mount of Olives...

Eusebius stated that on this very mountain (called the new Mount Sion), the New Covenant had its beginning. He said: "The law of the New Covenant began [on the Mount of Olives], and from THENCE [the Mount of Olives] went forth and shone upon all" (**Proof of the Gospel, 1.4**). The New Testament makes it clear that it was the shedding of the blood of Jesus that brought into existence the New Covenant as interpreted by the apostles (**Hebrews 9:12-15**). With Eusebius stating that the New Covenant began on the new Mount Sion which he identified with Olivet, then we have his plain teaching that the death of Jesus took place on that mountain adjacent to Jerusalem...

Even Jerome recognized that "the glorious holy mountain" in Jerusalem had actually become the Mount of Olives. This was an official change for the "House of God" in the eyes of Jerome because the Shekinah Glory had retreated from the Temple Mount and it went to the top of the Mount of Olives and, as Jerome said, "founded the Church of the Lord." But when did the Shekinah Glory leave the Temple and hover over the Mount of Olives? Eusebius states that it was during "the siege of Jerusalem" (**A.D.66 to 70**) that "the passing of the Lord to the Mount of Olives" took place (**Proof of the Gospel, XVIII sect.294**).

Eusebius and Jerome, however, were not the only observers who said the Shekinah Glory left the Temple before the destruction of the Temple and hovered over the Mount of Olives. A Jewish rabbi named Jonathan (an eyewitness to the destruction of Jerusalem) said the Shekinah Glory left the Temple and (for three and a half years) "abode on the Mount of Olives hoping that Israel would repent, but they did not; while a Bet Kol [a supernatural voice from heaven] issued forth announcing, Return, O backsliding children [**Jeremiah 3:14**]. Return unto me' and I will return unto you [**Malachi 3:7**]. When they did not repent, it said, I will return to my place [in heaven] [**Hosea 5:15**]" (Midrash, Rabbah **Lamentations 2:11**)...

Besides these evidences, there was another writer (besides Eusebius, Jerome and Jonathan) who mentioned the Shekinah Glory of God leaving the Temple at Jerusalem just prior to the war with the Romans. This was the Jewish historian, Josephus. Josephus said that in the Spring of **A.D.66** some remarkable events took place that involved the Temple at Jerusalem. In fact, Josephus gave three miracles associated with the Shekinah Glory and the Temple and each one showed that the "Glory" was departing the Holy Sanctuary.

In **Wars of the Jews VI.290** he stated that a great light shone over the altar for thirty minutes at 3 o'clock in the morning (a week before Passover in **A.D. 66**) and then it departed. He said the sacred scribes interpreted this sign as a bad omen for the Temple. It was like the Shekinah Glory moving away from the Tabernacle in the wilderness as a sign to disassemble the Tabernacle and transport it to another location. This may have been fine for the Tabernacle (which was portable), but it was impossible to move the Temple which was made of stone and timber.

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

"Moreover, at the festival which is called Pentecost, the priests on entering the inner court of the Temple at nightfall, as their custom was in accomplishment of their ministrations, stated that they first became aware of a commotion and a roar, and after that the voice of a great multitude saying 'We are departing hence'" (**Wars of the Jews VI.299**). This is the testimony of Josephus (who was an eyewitness to these times) that the Shekinah Glory left the old Temple on that Pentecost day in **A.D. 66**. When we couple this information with that of Rabbi Jonathan (also an eyewitness), we find that the "Glory" went directly to the Mount of Olives and in some

manner that the Jewish people were aware remained over the top of Olivet for 3 and 1/2 years (this would mean from late Spring in **A.D. 66** to about December of **A.D. 69**, nearly eight months before the Temple was destroyed) and then it went back to heaven according to Rabbi Jonathan, and it has not returned since.

This was highly significant to Christians. It certainly was to Eusebius in his early work *The Proof of the Gospel* and to Jerome. This meant that the Shekinah Glory which made the Temple holy in the first place retreated from the Temple and positioned itself directly over the very region where Jesus died for mankind and where he was resurrected from the dead. From that region it apparently manifested itself as a divine apparition from time to time (as it once did when it was associated with the Temple) and, according to Rabbi Jonathan, it gave its warnings to repent to the people of Jerusalem over a period of 3 and 1/2 years...

Indeed, Eusebius connected the final sign given to the twenty-four priests at Pentecost in **A.D. 66**, with an oracle given to Christians at this same period which warned them to abandon Jerusalem in accordance with Jesus' prophecies.

"The whole body of the church at Jerusalem having been commanded by a divine revelation, given to men of approved piety before the war [the 24 priests who entered the Temple on Pentecost], removed from the city and dwelt in a certain town beyond Jordan called Pella" (**Ecclesiastical History, 111.5**; cf. Epiphanius, *Haeres. Nazaraeorum*, 7).

That does not end the story. Not long after the war was over in **A.D. 70**, Eusebius reports that Christians returned to the region of Jerusalem and that fifteen Jewish bishops ruled in the city for the next 62 years (**Ecclesiastical History, IV.5**). Once the Jewish Christians returned to the Jerusalem area from Pella, they installed their first bishop to head the Jerusalem church. They selected Simeon, the brother of James and one of the children of Joseph and Mary (Simeon was a "half-brother" of Jesus by physical descent). These Jewish Christians, according to Eusebius, established their church headquarters on the Mount of Olives. Notice his *Proof of the Gospel*.

"And this Mount of Olives is said to be over against Jerusalem, because it was established by God after the fall of Jerusalem, instead of the old earthly Jerusalem" (**Proof of the Gospel, VI. 18**) (**Golgotha, p.166-167, 169-172, 176-177, 179-182, 185, 188-191**).

Ernest Martin originally wrote "Secrets of Golgotha" long before he wrote "The Temples That Jerusalem Forgot". In "Secrets of Golgotha" he believed that the Temple stood where the Dome of the Rock was before later changing his opinion. The southern summit of the Mount of Olives where the Miphkad altar was almost due east of the Dome of the Rock.

When he had to change his opinion on where the Temple was, which was over 600 feet further south, he had to question where the Miphkad altar really was.

Was it on the more well-known northern summit of the Mount of Olives? Was it on the lesser known southern summit to the SE of the northern summit and which is 10 degrees north of east from the true Temple site? Or was it due east of the true Temple site on the Mount of Offense, which may have been considered part of the Mount of Olives as the southern of three summits.

From the following quotes in "The Temples That Jerusalem Forgot" it appears that he changed his opinion and felt that the Miphkad altar was due east of the Temple on the Mount of Offense:

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"...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) (**Temples p.268, 251**).

Is this correct? Was the Miphkad altar on the Mount of Offense directly across the Kidron Valley from the Gihon Spring and SE spur where the true Temple site was located? I don't believe so. The major objection is the distance.

The Mount of Offense is too close to the Temple site to be outside the camp. In fact, it is less than half the distance required to be outside the camp as you see on the areial photo showing the distances below. All the quoted historical references point to the Mount of Olives as the site for the Miphkad Altar and I also find it a bit of a stretch that the Mount of Offense was referred to as the Mount of Olives.



So what about the other two possible locations for the Miphkad Altar – the northern and southern summits of the Mount of Olives? The southern summit is closer to due east of the true Temple site and is far away enough but there is one objection that rules it out. There is no clear line of sight from it to the true Temple site (or to the Dome of the Rock for that matter). The Mount of Offense completely blocks the view of the City of David and true Temple site while the northern summit blocks the view of the Dome of the Rock.

Only the well-known northern Mount of Olives is far away enough from the true Temple site (3000 feet) and has a clear line of sight to the true Temple site. I favour the location of the Seven Arches Hotel and its terrific lookout as the true location of the Miphkad Altar and site of the crucifixion as it is the closest location on the northern Mount of Olives that is at least 3000 feet from the true Temple site.

Any further down the slope near the road to Bethany and you go under the minimum distance to be “outside the camp”. Any further north toward the Pater Noster church and the Church of the Ascension at the northern summit and the angle from east becomes too great.

The Pater Noster church and the Church of the Ascension are almost NE of the true Temple site (45 degrees north of east). The Seven Arches Hotel is about 30 degrees north of east. This is not ideal as far as the eastern symbolism goes but any location closer to due east that is “outside the camp” has a completely obscured view of the Temple site due to the Mount of Offense blocking its view.

The Church of the Ascension at the northern summit of the Mount of Olives is just far away enough to be “outside of the camp” and it is also due east of the Dome of the Rock. This does lend some credence to it being the true Temple site but as we have seen in the previous major section of this compilation there is a whole plethora of other evidences ruling it out as the true site of the Temples.

Below is a photo of the view from the City of David lookout near the true Temple site looking NE. The Seven Arches Hotel is at the top of the “bare” summit in the middle and the Mount of Offense is on the right and it completely obscures the view of the lesser known southern summit of the Mount of Olives.



How Helena Chose the Holy Sepulchre as the Site of Christ’s Crucifixion

The Church of the Holy Sepulchre is the traditional site accepted by Catholics and Orthodox Christians as the site of Christ’s crucifixion and burial. How did this site come to be the site accepted by Catholics and Orthodox Christians? John Keyser tells us the story how:

The site of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre has an even more intriguing background! This traditional site of Christ’s burying place has long been honored by Christians of all lands as the indisputable place where Joseph of Arimathea laid the body of the Savior following His death at Golgotha.

It is startling to realize that this belief is based entirely upon a tradition that emerged as late as **333 A.D.** - after a lapse of more than three centuries from the date of the actual event! The tradition becomes the more shadowy when it is recalled that, between the time of the crucifixion and the date of the supposed discovery of the

tomb, the city of Jerusalem had been reduced to a virtual rubble-heap by the Romans and, a century later, completely replanned and rebuilt...

It was **THREE HUNDRED YEARS** after the death of Christ that Macarius, Bishop of Jerusalem, excavated a tomb beneath a Roman temple of Venus and, on the **SLENDER** evidence of the members of a then existing local Christian community, it has been accepted as the authentic sepulchre of Jesus.

In **135 A.D.**, following the Bar-Kokhba uprising in Palestine, the emperor Hadrian erected this pagan temple of Venus over a spot in Jerusalem that the theologians have since claimed was the site of the crucifixion and burial of the Savior. Were they right?

Many scholars today believe Hadrian hated the Christians so much that he decided to **DESECRATE** the most holy place of their religion. However, as truth would have it, the emperor was **UPSET AT THE JEWS**, not the Christians! The early church had nothing to do with the Bar-Kokhba revolution because it didn't accept Kokhba's claims of being the promised Messiah...So whose tomb was he desecrating?

The works of Josephus contain the answer. Prior to the Roman destruction of **70 A.D.**, Josephus visited this area of Jerusalem and mentioned a significant **TOMB** four times, using it as a **FOCAL POINT** in his description of the war with the Romans. This "significant landmark" was none other than the tomb of John Hyrcanus, the famous high priest ruler of the Jews who reigned from **135 to 104 B.C.**! This leader had the deep respect of most Jews and symbolized the quest for Jewish liberation from their hated Gentile oppressors.

In his distaste for the Jews, **WHAT BETTER PLACE** for Hadrian to desecrate with the Temple of Venus than this?

The years slipped by. In **306** Constantine came to the throne of the Roman Empire and, after seeing the famous vision of the flaming cross just before the Battle of Milvian Bridge, he became touted as the first Christian emperor. From **312** onwards these visions became a regular part of Constantine's life; and he began to think of himself as divinely selected to set up the Kingdom of God on earth. All of his major decisions were guided by visions and dreams; and in **326**, after he had executed his wife and son,



Constantine was led to believe that he should erect a church at the place of Christ's death and resurrection in Jerusalem in atonement for his actions against his own family.

In a dream or vision he was informed that the site of Hadrian's Temple of Venus was where he should erect his Church of the Holy Sepulchre; and he dispatched his mother Helena to the Holy City to determine where this site was.

Upon her arrival in Jerusalem, an incredible sequence of events took place. Paulinus of Nola, writing in **403 A.D.**, recounts what happened next:

"She [Helena] became eager to obtain information solely on the site of the crucifixion. So she sought out not only Christians full of learning and holiness, but also the most learned of the Jews to inform her of their native wickedness in which, the poor Jews,

they even boast. Having summoned them she assembled them in Jerusalem. Her resolve was strengthened by the UNANIMOUS WITNESS OF ALL ABOUT THE SITE. There was then, undoubtedly under the impulse of a revelation she had experienced, that she ordered digging operations to be prepared on that very site" (Letter 31.5).

The wily Jews, knowing full well that the Temple of Venus covered the tomb of John Hyrcanus, went along with Constantine's dream and confirmed that this was indeed the place of Jesus' death and burial! In actuality, Helena wanted confirmation of the visions and dreams which she and her son Constantine had experienced; and the Jews were more than willing to oblige!

Sozomen, the famous 5th-century church historian, adds some detail: "Some say that the facts [about Christ's tomb] were first disclosed by a Hebrew who dwelt in the East, and who derived his information from some documents which had come down to him by paternal inheritance" (Ecclesiastical History, II.1).

Ironically, the man who supposedly had this historical evidence for the site of Christ's passion, was a Jew by the name of JUDAS! According to Ernest L. Martin:

"This Judas told Helena that the Temple of Venus was the proper site of Christ's crucifixion. Helena then, 'by an impulse of revelation,' had her attendants dig into the ground at the place where Judas told her. And amazingly, they came upon three crosses superimposed upon one another. But that wasn't the end of it. Nearby was found a tablet which had upon it the exact words which the New Testament said Pilate placed above Christ's head. Also found in the same spot was a sponge and a reed like those associated with Christ's passion" (**Secrets of Golgotha, p.127**).

Nobody, it seems, questioned the fact that these items were in an excellent state of preservation after being buried in the ground for some 295 years! This clinched the matter for Constantine's mother - the visions were verified, this was the site of Christ's death!

The story doesn't end here! Gregory of Tours, in his History of the Franks, records that "the venerable wood of the cross was discovered through the zeal of Helena, the Hebrew Judas revealing the spot, WHO WAS AFTERWARDS BAPTIZED AND NAMED QUIRIACUS." (I.36). This wily Jew, who was not even a Christian at the time of the "discovery," became famous and was eventually made a bishop of Jerusalem!

As a result of Judas' "information" and the visions of Constantine and his mother, the Christian world has been worshipping at the tomb of the Jewish high priest John Hyrcanus...What a fantastic hoax, what irony! The last laugh truly belongs to the Jews!

Finally, the Church of the Holy Sepulchre CANNOT be the site of the crucifixion because IT FALLS WELL WITHIN THE LIMITS OF THE CAMP! Remember, Christ was put to death "OUTSIDE THE CAMP"! (**Just Where in Jerusalem Did Our Savior Die?** - <http://hope-of-israel.org/wherejer.htm>).

The Merits of Jeremiah's Grotto and the Garden Tomb

The favoured Protestant site for the crucifixion is a hill referred to as Jeremiah's Grotto just to the north of the Damascus Gate at the north of the old city. Next to this strikingly shaped hill is the Garden Tomb which is the Protestant choice for the place of Jesus' burial and resurrection. What are the merits of these locations just outside the northern Damascus Gate. In his article "**Just Where in Jerusalem Did Our Savior Die?**" - <http://hope-of-israel.org/wherejer.htm>" John Keyser gives his views as to the merits of these sites:

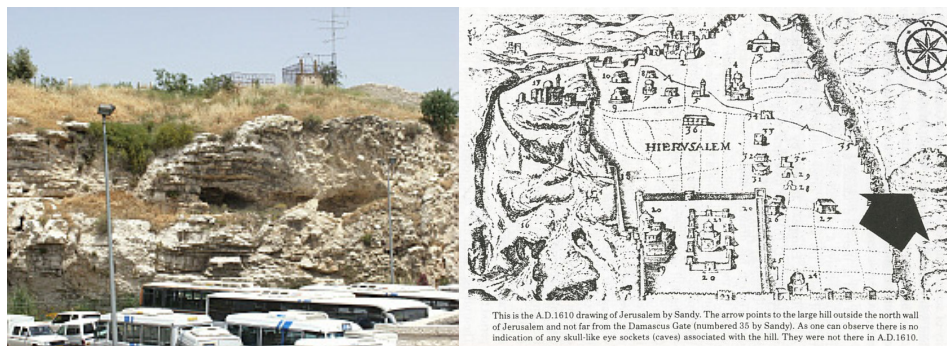
The hill at Jeremiah's Grotto, alongside the present-day bus station, was suggested by Otto Thenius in **1849**. This theory, with the addition of the Garden Tomb nearby, had many supporters, including the scholarly General Gordon of Khartoum fame.

Known as Gordon's Calvary, this hill was successfully promoted by the British general in **1882**; but what about all the centuries before? Does the exposure of this hill, as we know it today, even reach back to the time of Christ? Rocky hills or bluffs are quite common to the whole area around Jerusalem. It is not as though this hill has been identified as Calvary for centuries!

It must be admitted that no site lends itself better to a spectacular reconstruction of the last hours of Christ. The hill itself has natural caves that give the appearance of eyes; and below the rock wall recently built by the Arabs, another set of gaping holes, representing a nose and mouth, are apparent. Hence "Golgotha" or the "Place of the Skull." The Garden Tomb, immediately to the left, adds credence to this being the actual site of our Savior's death.

However, there are some problems! If the skull-like appearance of Jeremiah's Grotto had these same features back in the early centuries after the crucifixion, why is there no mention of it in the literature of the time? It seems strange that Helena, the mother of Emperor Constantine, was not directed to this spot when she was seeking the site of Christ's death to build her Church of the Holy Sepulchre. A hill with features such as this would have **STOOD OUT** as clearly being Golgotha, or "the Place of the Skull." (**John 19:17**). Instead the local Jews directed Helena to a site just west of the Second Wall and north of the Garden Gate. It turns out that the features that were so evident in this hill by the Damascus Gate during Otto Thenius' time **WERE NOT THERE** during the time of Christ! In fact, evidence shows the caves were not there as late as **1610 A.D.**

During this particular year a European traveller, by the name of Sandy, drew a picture of Jerusalem featuring some of the geographical landmarks in and around the Holy City. This drawing, which is still extant, shows the hill just outside the Damascus Gate as having **NO FEATURES** or caves representing the human skull. Evidently, erosion **SINCE 1610** has created these unique features which led to Thenius' choice. Even in the last twenty or so years the skull-like features of Jeremiah's Grotto have eroded to such an extent that they are hardly recognizable anymore!



According to Harper's Bible Dictionary "there is little to substantiate the view of those who accept the skull-like hillock called 'Gordon's Calvary,' with its eye-socketted caves recognized in **1849** by Otto Thenius." (p. 87).

"O.K.," you might ask, "what about the Garden Tomb close by the Grotto? Surely that's authentic!" Unfortunately, research in the last twelve years has revealed this tomb, along with others in the area, to be products of the seventh-century B.C. An article in the Biblical Archaeology Review for March/April of **1986** details this discovery, thus proving the Garden Tomb could **NOT** be the resting place of Christ.

John 19:41 clearly states that it was a NEW TOMB -- recently hewn out of the rock (**Luke 23:53, Matthew 27:60**) -- that received the battered body of the Messiah.

Moreover, this tomb is actually a DOUBLE one. There are places cut out in the rock for TWO bodies. "A rich man, it is explained, might have had a tomb for himself and his wife. But the Bible simply says that Joseph placed the body of Jesus 'in HIS OWN new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock' (**Matthew 27:60**)."

(Amazing Discoveries Within the Book of Books, by Ralph Woodrow. p. 50). There is absolutely NO MENTION in the Bible of it being a tomb for two.

Interestingly enough, the custodians of the Garden Tomb area do not insist that Christ was buried there. Rather, they explain that this tomb probably dates from the first century and if this was not the tomb, it was one very similar to this. Instead, emphasis is placed on the fact that the tomb -- wherever it might have been - is an EMPTY tomb!

Jonathan Gray, author of the book "Ark of the Covenant", is a strong supporter of Ron Wyatt's claimed discoveries.

Ron Wyatt claimed to have found the Ark of the Covenant deep underneath the hill of Jeremiah's grotto near the Garden Tomb. He also suggested that there was a crack in the rock above the ark and the crack may have allowed blood from Jesus Christ to descend onto the ark from where He was crucified above it.

Given the rugged nature of the hill a crack in the cave above it would not be unusual. A natural crack would have to be totally vertical for blood to descend even several feet through it without being stopped.

In a video presentation by Jonathan Gray on Ron Wyatt's claimed finding of the Ark of the Covenant Jonathan Gray claims that Ron found at a certain level below the hill a place where there were three post holes and a giant stone in front of it that matched precisely the dimensions the missing stone in front of the Garden Tomb would have been. No photographic evidence was ever presented to support this claim.



John Keyser noted above that the tomb of Christ was a new one (**Luke 23:53, Matthew 27:60**) and archeaology has shown the tombs in and around the Garden Tomb can be dated to the **seventh century BC**. One more point argues against the Garden Tomb being the tomb of Jesus Christ. In **John 20:4-5** we read:

“So they both ran together and the other disciple (John) outran Peter and came to the tomb first. And he, **STOOPING DOWN** and looking in saw the linen clothes lying there.”

John had to stoop down in order to look into the tomb. There is little or no real bending down required with the tomb at the Garden Tomb.

A Tale of Two Trees

Mr Armstrong in his latter years spoke very often about the two trees and the Garden of Eden story revolving around the choice of Adam and Eve to partake of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil instead of the Tree of Life. That choice to disobey God and take of the forbidden fruit (that which belonged ONLY to God) set the scene for the wrong foundation of this world and all its evils by rejecting God and His laws.

What were type of trees were the two trees? We have seen that the earthly tabernacle and Temple was modeled after the Garden of Eden and the heavenly Temple. The Holy of holies symbolised the midst of the Garden where the two trees was.

Within the Holy of holies was placed Aaron’s rod that miraculously budded which symbolised the Tree of Life. In **Numbers 17:8** we read:

The rod of Aaron of the house of Levi had sprouted and put forth buds, had produced blossoms and yielded ripe **ALMONDS**.



Aaron’s rod that budded was an almond tree. Since it symbolised the Tree of Life there is every chance that the Tree of Life was an almond tree. Ernest Martin makes these comments:

The Old Testament description of the Menorah constructed in the time of Moses showed that it was intimately connected with the almond tree motif. Note that the flowers and the bowls for the oil on each of the seven branches of the Menorah were designed to be like those of the almond tree (**Exodus 37:17-24**).

This almond tree type of lampstand was placed by Moses in the Holy Place of the Tabernacle just outside the Holy of Holies. But inside the inner sanctum itself was deposited the rod of Aaron that budded. It too had the symbol of the almond tree

associated with it. The rod brought forth almond flowers and even almonds themselves in a supernatural manner (**Numbers 17:1-13**). Because Moses placed this almond rod of Aaron inside the Holy of Holies, this goes a long way in showing that the rod (with its almond tree genre) was the symbolic Tree of Life which had been in the Garden of Eden.

Philo in the time of Jesus, said the almond tree was "the emblem of the priesthood" (Life of Moses, 111.22) because it was the first to bloom in the springtime and the last to lose its leaves. This tree showed the greatest longevity of life each year and it was a fit symbol for the Tree of Life (**Golgotha p.384**).

In **Revelation 22:2** we read the about the river of life and the tree of life in the New Jerusalem:

In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, **was the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits**, each *tree* yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree *were* for the healing of the nations.

The tree of life here bears 12 different fruits beyond the almonds which may have been the original fruit from it. Given the prominence of the olive tree, especially on the Mount of Olives, there is also the possibility that the olive tree could have been the tree of life though olives are quite salty to the taste.

Traditionally the forbidden fruit of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil is portrayed as an apple. Was it an apple or something else?

Shortly before Jesus was crucified there is recorded an incident that strongly suggests that the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil was a fig tree. Now a fig tree is also used in a positive way in the Bible in the millennial verse that speaks of every man sitting under his vine and under his fig tree and no one being afraid (**Micah 4:4**).

The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil belonged **ONLY** to God so there is nothing evil about the tree by and of itself. The evil was the choice of Adam and Eve to disobey and take what belonged **ONLY** to God against His clear instructions. Ernest Martin writes the following about the connection between the fig tree and the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil:

It will be remembered that in the Garden in Eden there were two trees that God specifically selected for the attention of Adam and Eve. One was the Tree of Life and the other was the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. Our first parents partook of this latter tree and they were then expelled from the Garden for this sin (the first sins ever committed by mankind).

What type of tree was this that Adam and Eve partook of? While many different types of trees have been guessed (the pomegranate, date, grape and even the apple), the only tree mentioned in the context of Genesis describing the "fall" of Adam and Eve is the "fig." It is to be noted that as soon as Adam and Eve knew they had sinned, they sewed fig leaves together to hide their shame. It is well documented among the Jews that this was understood to be the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil.

"What was the tree of which Adam and Eve ate? Rabbi Yosi says: It was the fig tree...the fig whereof he ate the fruit opened its doors and took him in" (Midrash, Bereshith Raba, 15,7).

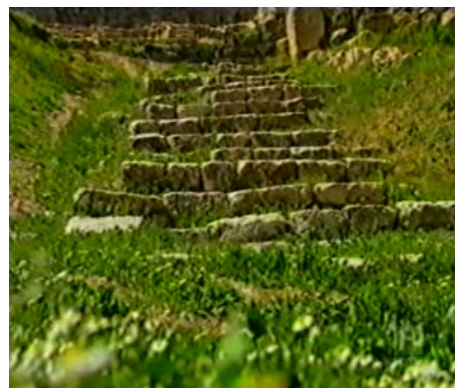
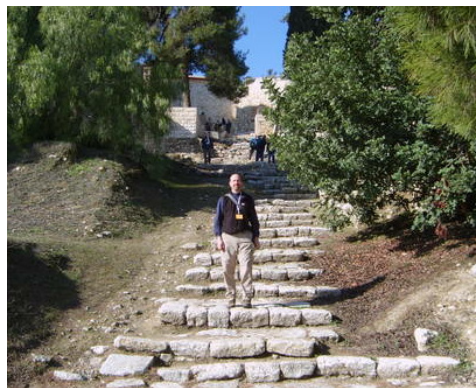
"The fig leaf which brought remorse to the world" (ibid., 19, 11).

"The tree of which the first man ate ... Rabbi Nehemiah says: It was the fig, the thing wherewith they were spoilt, yet were they redressed by it. As it is said: And they stitched a fig-leaf" (Berakoth 40a, and see Sanhedrin 70a).

In the non-canonical Book of Adam and Eve (20:5) it says: "I sought a leaf to cover up my nakedness and found none, for, when I ate, the leaves withered off every tree in my plot except for the fig, and from it I took leaves and it made me a girdle, even from the tree of which I ate"...

The symbol of the fig tree as being the "evil" tree in the Garden of Eden figures in a prominent episode that occurred during the week just before Jesus was crucified. Once the symbolic meaning of the fig tree is recognized, then this special event can make a great deal of doctrinal sense in regard to the role that Jesus played in expelling "sin" from the world. I am talking about the time when he saw a fig tree on the Mount of Olives as he was approaching Jerusalem, and he cursed it. This fig tree would have been very near if not directly adjacent to the village of Bethphage which meant "House of Unripe Figs." Before that day was over that particular fig tree was withered up and completely dead. This has a remarkable figurative meaning to it.

Four days before his crucifixion, Jesus left Bethany and started walking towards Jerusalem. When he was near the summit of the Mount of Olives, opposite Bethphage, he noticed on the side of the road a fig tree. He went to it and finding no figs on its branches (yet the tree was covered with leaves), he cursed that fig tree and said: "Let no man eat fruit from you henceforth forever. And his disciples heard it" (**Mark 11:14**). The cursing of that particular fig tree has baffled men ever since. The truth is, even Mark said that "it was not the season of figs" (**Mark 11:13**). Indeed, difficulty in understanding the curse of Jesus went further than that. It was not even the time for fig trees to have leaves! It has puzzled people for generations why Jesus was so upset with a fig tree that by nature should not have had figs or leaves...



Since the tree was located on a main thoroughfare into Jerusalem and with the heavy population around the city at that Passover season, it is not to be imagined that Jesus expected to find a few dried figs of last year's crop on the branches. The tree would surely have been stripped clean of its fruit [The fruit season was around Tabernacles]. Jesus must have known that he would not find any figs on this unusual fig tree...

Note that the next day after Jesus cursed that fig tree, the disciples found it withered (**Mark 11:20,22; Matthew 21:18-21**). What was significant about this? It meant that the type of tree that Adam and Eve first ate which brought sin and death to them (and in an extended sense to all humanity) was now withered and dead.

Tradition had it that the only tree under Adam's care in the Garden of Eden that did not shed its leaves after our first parents took of the fruit was the fig tree. It was the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. But with this miracle of Jesus on the Mount of Olives, it meant that symbolic tree was now withered and dead. It signified that no longer would that type of tree be in the midst of humanity to encourage mankind to sin in the manner of our first parents...

Jesus cursed that symbolic tree at the top of Olivet so that no man would eat of it again. And to complete his victory over sin, a short time later Jesus was going to be sacrificed for the sins of the world just a few yards away from this withered and dead tree. What Jesus was doing in the last week of his life on earth was acting out a symbolic victory over all the factors in the Garden of Eden around which our first parents failed. The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil was now withered and dead.

But there was a second symbolic meaning to the withering of the fig tree. There was the village of priests called Bethphage (House of Unripe Figs) along side that withered tree. And Bethphage was where the Sanhedrin met for special sentencing, especially that dealing with whom they considered to be a rebellious elder who needed to be excommunicated. And why was this priestly village called Bethphage? It meant "The House of Unripe Figs." The Jewish authorities understood that the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil from which Adam and Eve ate that brought sin into the world was the fig (not the apple). Adam and Eve took leaves from that very tree from which they ate to hide their nakedness from God. But, in the case of the Sanhedrin at Jerusalem at Bethphage, they were supposed to act as God's judges and thereby they were supposed to be rendered free of sin in their adjudications. This is probably why they named the village on Olivet the "House of Unripe Figs" because at this place of the court there were supposed to be no ripe figs available to tempt the judges to eat of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil like was the case with Adam and Eve...

It was no accident that Jesus told his disciples to go into Bethphage and obtain a donkey for him to ride into Jerusalem to fulfill the prophecy of Zechariah about the Jews adoring their king riding on a donkey. By getting this donkey at Bethphage was like saying that Jesus went to the Supreme Court for his transport.

But there is even more. Note that when Jesus departed on the donkey from Bethphage that the people praised him as the King of Israel (**Matthew 21:1-17**). Jesus then returned to Bethany on the east side of the Mount of Olives and the next morning started once again into Jerusalem. He then saw the fig tree (note carefully that this was a fig tree) that had no eatable fruit on it. Indeed, the texts say that it was not yet the time for ripe figs because it was so early in the season. But Christ, finding no ripe figs on it, cursed it then and there. This event occurred on the Mount of Olives and right next to the village of Bethphage (the House of Unripe Figs). Soon that fig tree withered away and died, within a matter of hours.

Jews living at the time in Jerusalem (without the slightest doubt in their minds) would have known the significance that Jesus was placing on that miraculous event. That fig tree itself was a "Tree of Unripe Figs" which was located next to the village of Bethphage (with the name "House of Unripe Figs") which was the site where the Sanhedrin determined the limits of things that were holy and things not holy. In effect, Jesus through the miraculous withering of that fig tree of unripe figs was showing the demise and final authority of the Sanhedrin to make decisions at Bethphage (the House of Unripe Figs).

Later Jewish interpretation said that the verse in the Song of Songs which said: "the fig tree putteth forth her green figs" (**Song of Songs 2:13**) was figurative of the coming days of the Messiah, see the fifth century Jewish work called the Pesikta de-Rab Kahana (Piska 5:9). But here was Jesus, doing the work of the Messiah, causing the fig tree with no figs to dry up. The official work of God was to be given to a nation

bringing forth proper results. Recall, Jesus later stated in the Temple: "Therefore say I unto you. The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof" (**Matthew 21:43**) (**Golgotha p.138-144**).

Not far from where Christ cursed the fig tree on the Mount of Olives we will soon see that Jesus was also crucified on a tree – perhaps even an almond tree that symbolised the tree of life. On that tree that Christ was crucified on life was given to humanity through His great sacrifice by paying the penalty of sin in our place.

Was that tree He was crucified on an almond tree like the Tree of Life appears to have been? Quite possibly. We are told that there was a garden close by where Joseph laid Jesus' body. This may have had trees such as almond and olive trees.

We will also see that Jesus and the two criminals were crucified on the same tree and their six arms and the tree as a seventh symbolised the seven-branched menorah.

Jesus was Crucified on a Tree

What was the type of cross that Jesus was crucified on? What is the meaning of the word *stauros* translated cross? Is it an upright stake or a cross of two types of wood?

Ralph Woodrow, in his book *Babylon Mystery Religion* says the following about whether *stauros* meant an upright stake or not:

"The statement of Thomas about the print of NAILS (PLURAL) in the hands of Jesus (John 20:25) would seem to indicate a CROSS PIECE, for on a single stake his hands would have probably been driven through with ONE NAIL." (p.53).

Ernest Martin tells us the following:

Almost everyone for the past 1600 years has imagined that Jesus was martyred on either a Roman or Greek type of cross or perhaps a simple stake without a crosspiece. The New Testament, however, gives information on this matter that is counter to all these suggestions. The truth is, Jesus was not killed on a cross which was a beam of timber on which were nailed one or more crosspieces, nor was it a single upright pole (without a crosspiece) with his hands brought together and nailed above his head. In this chapter we will discuss the actual way in which he was crucified.

What first must be understood is that Jesus met his death in a garden (**John 19:41**). Actually, the word garden in the Greek has the meaning of orchard or plantation - a place of trees. It appears that Golgotha (which the Bordeaux Pilgrim called a *monticulus* - a small hill on top of a mount) must have had trees associated with it. It was to this hill that Jesus carried his cross on which he was crucified.

Many scholars today believe it is inconceivable that Jesus, who had been subjected to extensive beatings and whippings, could have carried a fully assembled Latin cross that would have weighed 200 pounds or more. Such a heavy weight certainly has to be the case for an assembled Latin or Greek cross. But this is NOT what happened. The cross he transported was only the upper crosspiece which was nailed to a larger and more substantial support. It was to this board plank that Jesus' arms or his wrists were affixed, and what Simon of Cyrene carried the final distance to Golgotha. Such

crosspieces associated with crucifixions were given a technical name in Latin. This upper part of the cross was called a patibulum.

When Golgotha was finally reached, Jesus then had his arms or wrists nailed to the patibulum. Both he and the patibulum were then hoisted upwards and the crosspiece was nailed to some substantial stock of wood large enough to support the person being crucified. It was also common to bend the victim's legs upwards and nail the feet to the stock of wood itself. Sometimes a wood block was attached to the main support near the midsection of the body on which the buttocks of the victim could rest.

There were also two robbers who were crucified with him. There can hardly be any doubt that the same procedure of crucifixion was adopted for them. This would mean that the two robbers were each affixed to an individual patibulum, and then each patibulum was nailed to a large stock of wood. But what kind of wooden support was this that Jesus had his patibulum and his feet nailed to? The Bible shows that it was something entirely different from what most people believe today. It was not a dead piece of timber. Indeed, both the apostles Peter and Paul said that Jesus was nailed to a tree, not to pieces of timber. He was crucified on a living tree...

Using a living tree as the main stock of wood for the patibulums of Jesus and the two robbers gave the soldiers the advantage of not having to dig holes some five or six feet deep in order to secure three large standing poles to support the patibulums of the three men. The soldiers, at first, simply nailed their arms to the patibulums and then lifted each board plank up to the middle of a tree, and then each of the patibulums was nailed to the tree. Finally, each of the three men had his lower legs nailed to the trunk of the tree. This was an ordinary tree like any tree found in an orchard today. And this is precisely what Peter and Paul said in the New Testament. Jesus was nailed to a tree (in Greek: xylon) which in this case was a living tree. Notice what Peter said.

"The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a TREE' (**Acts 5:30**).

"We are witnesses of all things which he did both in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem: whom they slew and hanged on a TREE' (**Acts 10:39**).

"Who his own body bare our sins in his own body on the TREE' (**1 Peter 2:24**).



The apostle Paul spoke the same thing.

"They took him down from the TREE' (**Acts 13:29**).

In all these instances the tree was a living tree. Jesus himself said at the very time of his crucifixion: For if they do these things in (dative: with) a green TREE, what shall be done in (dative: with) the dry? (**Luke 23:31**). This indication shows that Jesus was crucified with (or by means of) a living tree (Greek: xylon). it was the instrument by which he was executed. Paul also emphasized this fact in **Galatians 3:13**.

"Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, 'Cursed is every one that hangeth on a TREE.' "

Paul was quoting **Deuteronomy 21:23** where it states that the Israelites in the time of Moses were to hang the dead bodies of criminals on the bough or limbs of a tree until sundown...

But wait a moment. Have we not been told that Jesus was crucified on a stauros (the KJV always translates this Greek word by the English word "cross," but I will retain in this book the transliterated word stauros). The New Testament usage, however, does not demand the Latin type of cross (or any other type of cross made up of dry pieces of timber in some way nailed together).

The Greek word stauros by the first century had come to have a variety of meanings. The original significance of the word stauros meant simply an upright pole or a stake. Like today, even we may speak of pole to which one tethers an animal. In such a case we almost always think of a single stake secured to the ground. But if we should say telephone pole, we could think of a single stake or a pole with one, two or even five crosspieces attached to it. Even our English word pole can have several similar meanings. The Greek word stauros fits into the same category...

In the writings of Ignatius he said it was believed that the instrument of death on which Jesus was crucified represented the Tree of Life which was mentioned in the Book of Revelation (**Revelation 2:7; 22:2,14**), and of course that Tree of Life was a living xylon (tree) just as the apostles Peter and Paul said Jesus was crucified on a similar xylon (tree). There is no doubt that Christians up to the middle of the second century knew Jesus was crucified on a literal tree. Melito of Sardis consistently said the cross of Jesus was a tree. He said: Just as from a tree came sin, so also from a tree came salvation (New Fragment, IIIA)...

There is another important point that must be made to make the story of Jesus' crucifixion properly understood by us of modern times, and it is also very different from what most people today have imagined. It may be surprising but the apostle John shows that Jesus and the two robbers were crucified together on ONE TREE, not on three separate trees. Notice what he recorded.

"The Jews therefore, because it was the preparation, that the bodies (note the plural, BODIES] should not remain on the STAUROS (singular) on the sabbath day (for that day was an high day), besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away. Then came the soldiers, and brake the legs of the first, and of the other crucified with him. But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs" (**John 19:31-33**).

These verses tell us very much. They show that there were three men crucified ON ONE STAUROS...Even breaking the legs of the two robbers shows that Jesus and the two malefactors were affixed to one tree. Note that the Scripture shows that one robber was on one side of Jesus and the other robber on the opposite side. Then two robbers were crucified with him, one on his right and one on his left (**Matthew 27:38**).

If one robber was crucified on a separate cross on Jesus' left side (as is normally depicted), and the other robber on another cross on his right (so that there were three crosses placed side by side with one another with Jesus situated in the middle), we then have a major problem with the deaths of the two robbers. This is because the soldiers killed first the two robbers and last of all they came to Jesus in the middle to slay him. Being in the middle should have made Jesus the second to be killed. (**Golgotha p.288-292, 295-296**).

Speaking about the means of crucifixion the UCG booklet "Jesus Christ – the Real Story" says this:

The Roman historian Seneca, describing the horror of crucifixion, argued that it would be better to commit suicide than endure such a tortured death. "Can anyone be found who would prefer wasting away in pain dying limb by limb, or letting out his life drop by drop, rather than expiring once for all? Can any man be found willing to be fastened to **the accursed tree**...He would have many excuses for dying even before mounting the cross". Seneca's reference to "the accursed tree" is strongly reminiscent of Peter's words when he speaks of Jesus, "who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree" (1 Peter 2:24) (p.41).

Supernatural Signs After Christ's Crucifixion and Resurrection

In the 40 years between the crucifixion of Jesus and the destruction of the Temple the Jewish priests in the Temple witnessed four great supernatural signs that are recorded in the Jewish records of the time. These not only showed that the Temple was soon to be destroyed but also directed people to accept Jesus Christ as their Saviour. Ernest Martin tells us the following about these great signs:

Jewish authorities in the 40 years between Jesus' crucifixion in **A.D. 30** to **A.D. 70** were given some marvelous signs from God to show that Jesus' teaching about the coming destruction of the Temple would indeed take place. It is easy to see a preoccupation that the apostles (and other Christians) must have had regarding the 40 years' period after Jesus' resurrection. When Jesus delivered the Olivet Prophecy in **A.D. 30** about the destruction of Jerusalem, he said it would occur in that generation. And remarkably, the catastrophe did in fact happen in **A.D. 70** exactly 40 years later.

There were four miraculous signs in particular that the apostles and the Jewish people witnessed in the 40 years before the destruction of the Temple and the historical accuracy of these four signs are recorded in both the Jerusalem and the Babylonian Talmuds...These signs all started with the exact year in which Jesus was crucified and anyone with any common sense should be able to tell that they were signs from God that had their significance beginning with that very year of the crucifixion of Jesus. This fact is not only important for Christians to know, but it is equally significant for all the Jewish people today. What were those four signs?

First, note what the Jerusalem Talmud has to say on this matter. [The following translation is that of Jacob Neusner from his book *The Yerushalmi*, pages 156,157.1]

"Forty years before the destruction of the Temple [starting in A.D.30] the western light went out, the crimson thread remained crimson, and the lot for the Lord always came up in the left hand. They would close the gates of the Temple by night and get up in the morning and find them wide open. Said Rabban Yohanan ben Zakkai to the Temple, 'O Temple, why do you frighten us? We know that you will end up destroyed. For it has been said 'Open your doors, O Lebanon [a symbol for the Temple at Jerusalem which was made from Lebanese timbers], that the fire may devour Your cedars' (**Zechariah 11:1**)" (Sotah 6:3).

Let us now look at what the Babylonian Talmud has to say (quoted from the Soncino Version).

"Our rabbis taught: During the last forty years before the destruction of the Temple the lot ['For the Lord'] did not come up in the right hand; nor did the crimson-coloured strap become white; nor did the western most light shine; and the doors of the Hekel would open by themselves, until Yohanan ben Zakkai rebuked them, saying: Hekel, Hekel, why wilt thou be the alarmer thyself? I know about thee that thou wilt be destroyed, for Zechariah ben Iddo has already prophesied concerning thee: Open thy

doors, O Lebanon, that the fire may devour thy cedars" (Yoma 39b the bold letters are mine, but the words in brackets and italics are part of the Soncino text).

The four signs are precisely the same in both Talmuds, and both state that the signs began in the year **30 A.D.**...

"Forty years before the destruction of Jerusalem, the Sanhedrin was banished [from the Chamber of Hewn Stones in the Temple] and sat in the Trading Station [also in the Temple, but east of its former location]" (Shabbath 15a).

As I explained in my earlier chapter, the move of the official Sanhedrin from the Chamber of Hewn Stones (near the Altar of Burnt Offering in the Temple) could be accounted for by the falling stone-work that was over the entrance to the Hekel [the Holy place] which supported the curtain that tore in two at the time of the crucifixion of Jesus. Something must have happened to that vaulted structure called the Chamber of Hewn Stones that rendered it unfit for the Sanhedrin to enter from **A.D. 30** onward. The earthquake at the crucifixion could well have caused the damage. No other explanation that is discernible in the historical records makes sense. This would mean that the last trial ever held in that prestigious and beautiful building on the Temple mount was that of Jesus.

With the event which destroyed the beautiful chambers of the Supreme Court (the Sanhedrin) on the Temple Mount (which occurred exactly forty years before the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple), there began a series of important signs that the Temple and its ritualistic system were destined to come to an end. The apostles of Jesus would have been well aware of these signs as were the Jewish people in Judaea. Indeed, the signs were looked on as being most important to the Jewish authorities.

The four signs involving the Temple were interpreted by Yohanan ben Zakkai (the most important rabbi at the time) as being warnings that the Temple was to be destroyed...One thing must be noticed by us all. Yohanan ben Zakkai (and all the later rabbis for the next 400 years) maintained that these four signs in the Temple were given by God to denote the coming destruction of the Temple, not that the people had gone over to Christianity or some other reason...

The truth is, Jesus had foretold, just two days before his crucifixion, that Jerusalem and the Temple were destined to be destroyed (**Matthew 24:1-3**). He had also told the authorities that he, himself, was the new Temple and that he (being that new Temple) would be raised from the dead after three days (**John 2:19-21**). All Jewish Christians who believed Jesus were looking for the destruction of the physical Temple that existed in Jerusalem, and Yohanan ben Zakkai (who lived at the time of the apostles, and afterward) also knew that God was prophesying the destruction of the Temple by the four major signs that were given at the time. Let us now look closely at what those signs were.

The Babylonian Talmud lists the first sign as being that in which the lot 'for the Lord' did not come up in the right hand (Yoma 39b). What was meant by this? The Holy Scriptures speak about this ceremony (**Leviticus 16:5-34**). On the Day of Atonement two identical goats were brought before the High Priest and lots were cast over them (one source says the lots were in the form of a white and black stone, the white stone was 'for the Lord' and the black was 'for the Scapegoat').

The priest would put his right hand into a receptacle containing the two stones and without looking down, select a stone with his right hand and place it over the right hand goat. The Babylonian Talmud says that in the previous two hundred years the stone would be sometimes white and sometimes black as most people would have expected (that is, a random selection each year would bring up the black stone as often as the white). But beginning in **A.D. 30** (the very year in which Jesus prophesied the coming destruction of the Temple, and the very year of his death and

resurrection), the right hand of the High Priest selected the black stone every time for forty straight years.

The odds of a black stone coming up forty times in a row are almost astronomical in scope. And, according to Pascal Table of Binominal Coefficients (a table of odds first devised by the French scientist Pascal who lived from A.D. **1623** to **1662** in which he showed odds in a pyramid style), the numerical odds of this happening under normal circumstances would be one chance in 1,099,511,627,776...

That does not conclude the matter. Both Talmuds also report another sign (from eyewitness accounts) that boggles the imagination. Also beginning in **A.D. 30** (the very year of Jesus' crucifixion), the western light of the Menorah (which is the Hebrew name for the seven branched lampstand in the Holy Place) went out for the same period of forty years. This Menorah was positioned with its seven lamps facing north. The western lamp was that which was next to the Holy of Holies and it was the most important for that reason.

In fact, we are told in the Talmud that at dusk the lamps that were unlit in the daytime (the middle four lamps remained unlit, while the two eastern lamps normally stayed lit during the day) were to be reignited from the flames of the western lamp (which was a lamp that was supposed to stay lit all the time - it was like the eternal flame that we see today in some national monuments)...Every night for forty years the western lamp went out and this was in spite of the priests each evening preparing the western lamp so that it would remain burning all night. This is eyewitness Jewish testimony!

Now, using the chances, according to Pascal's Table of Binominal Coefficients (which shows that there can be only one chance in 1,099,511,627,776 for a black stone to come up in the right hand for forty occasions), imagine what the odds would be for the western lamp (that was supposed to be the eternal flame for the nation) to go out each of the 365 days of a year for forty years?...

But that is still not all. For forty straight years (during that single generation following Jesus' crucifixion) the crimson strap never changed its color to white as it had often done in the previous two hundred years. This is a ceremony not mentioned in the Holy Scriptures, but it was associated with the Day of Atonement from at least the time of Simon the Righteous (an honorable and upright High Priest who lived in the third century B.C.).

It was noticed that on the Day of Atonement, when Simon would go into the Holy of Holies, that a crimson-colored thread that he had in association with his person miraculously turned white for the forty years he was priest and that the 'lot of the Lord' always came up in his right hand (Yoma 39b). It appears that this positive indication in both ceremonies (with the white constantly in evidence in the time of Simon the Righteous) became a pattern for future signs to the Jewish people in showing God's appraisal of the Temple and its rituals. They came to believe that these signs showed God's pleasure or displeasure with their activities...

From that moment on, the priests began to notice that the 'lot for the Lord' (which was the ceremony ordained in the Old Testament) would come up randomly, one time white and one time black. But that was not all. The crimson thread would sometimes also turn white and at other times it would remain its crimson color. This procedure prompted the Jewish rabbis to interpret that if the crimson thread turned white, then God approved of the Day of Atonement rituals every year and Israel could then be assured that they were forgiven their sins as the Holy Scriptures stated.

Thus, these traditional rites of the crimson colored thread and the biblical ceremony of the black and white stones were established as official signs of God's pleasure or displeasure. But note this. With the year **A.D. 30**, the crimson thread never turned white again and the white stone never came up in the right hand of the high priest (for

the period of forty years) from the time of Jesus' crucifixion until the complete destruction of the Temple in **A.D. 70**.

Yet still, there is even more to relate from the historical records of the early rabbis. During that same period of forty years, the doors of the Hekel (the doors in back of the Temple curtain that tore in two at Jesus' precise time of death) were found to be opening of their own accord at night during the time the Temple was off limits to the people. Both the Jerusalem and Babylonian Talmuds state that this opening of the Hekel doors was something that happened throughout the whole period of forty years...

That these four signs were directly from God (and that their wonderful consistency of action was showing the coming destruction of the Temple that Jesus foretold) is something that made sense to the early rabbis who lived from the time of the Temple's destruction and for almost four hundred years afterward. The apostles would also have been knowledgeable of these matters. In my estimation, those remarkable signs to the Jewish people came through the direct intervention of God. To believe they happened by chance is absurd (**Golgotha p.360-369**).

The Last Week of Jesus' Life from a True Historical Point of View

A major box-office hit seen by tens of millions of people in recent years was Mel Gibson's film "The Passion of the Christ".

How accurate was this movie? As far as what is traditionally believed by Catholics about the last day of Christ's life it is very accurate. But is it accurate according to the Bible? Sadly, the movie was riddled with historical errors. Mel Gibson admitted that it contained a mixture of the gospel accounts and the non-Biblical visions of a Catholic nun, Anne Catherine Emmerich. Sometimes Gibson put the details of the visions ahead of the accepted versions of the gospels and rejected views of historical consultants.

It is not my purpose here to highlight the many historical errors in Mel Gibson's version of the Passion. That has been amply demonstrated by various articles reviewing it such as the one by James Tabor found at <http://www.religiousstudies.uncc.edu/jdtabor/passion.html>.

In this section I would like to show in as full a way as possible the historical context of Jesus' last days as accurately as can be ascertained at this time. About the crucifixion of Jesus Christ Ernest Martin writes:

When it is recognized that Jesus was crucified on the Mount of Olives east of the main Temple, a whole new perspective awaits us than what is normally believed today. This necessitates looking at the biblical accounts in a far different way. Once the proper geographical locations are realized events which have not been understood for their symbolic value can now take on substantial significance (**Golgotha p.382**).

Let's now look at the dramatic last week of Jesus' life from a true historical point of view and see all the symbolism and drama behind it.

Six days before He was crucified He came to Bethany just on the eastern side of the Mount of Olives where Lazarus had been raised from the dead shortly beforehand. This astonishing event occurred very close to Jerusalem and only very shortly before He was crucified and so His reputation and fame was at its very peak when He made His entrance into Jerusalem.

Jesus had resisted all previous attempts by the masses to have Him proclaimed as a king of the Jews, knowing He was of the direct line of David. Yet now when His fame was at its peak He went along with the crowds as they shouted Hosanna as He entered Jerusalem.

This event needs to be understood better in its full historical context. Rome had conquered Palestine in **63 BC** under Pompey. To the east of the Roman Empire was another superpower of the time, Parthia.

According to Stephen Collins in his book "The Lost Tribes of Israel...Found!" this forgotten superpower was ruled by the descendants of the northern tribes of Israel that were deported to Assyria 700 years earlier. Josephus wrote that the "The ten tribes are beyond the Euphrates till now, and are an immense multitude" (**Antiquities of the Jews, bk.11, ch.5, sec.2**) in the first century. The Euphrates was the border between Rome and Parthia at the time. The Parthians were essentially related to the Jews as fellow tribes of Israel.

Parthia briefly ruled Palestine between **40-37 BC** before the Romans regained control. They enjoyed relative freedom at that time. Jesus already had close ties to Parthia's royalty since He was from the house of David. A massive caravan of Parthians including the Magi or wise men troubled "all of Jerusalem" when they learned of His birth. This almost created a major political incident and records show that Rome and Parthia were close to war around the time of Christ's birth before a conference which negotiated a peace treaty.

The Roman emperors gave specific instructions to avoid any confrontation with Parthia. This is why the ruthless Herod the Great acted so meekly when asked about where the king of the Jews was being born.

The Jews desperately wanted to be liberated and with the connections Jesus had with Parthian royalty the Jews could see the combination of Jesus miraculous powers and the support of the Parthians it was more than possible to drive out the Romans from Palestine.

In times past Jesus resisted all efforts by the people to have Him crowned as a king. Now when His fame is at its peak He lets the people believe that He is now ready to be reckoned as a king. This would have made the Romans feel very uneasy.

He comes into Jerusalem's east gate riding on a donkey just as a well-known prophecy about the Messiah said He would:

Tell the daughter of Zion, 'Behold, your King is coming to you, lowly, and sitting on a donkey, a colt, the foal of a donkey' (**Matthew 21:5**).

It must have been quite a scene seeing Him going down the wide Broadway, down the Descent of the Mount of Olives and across the Bridge of the Red Heifer.

Then, as He was now drawing near the descent of the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works they had seen, saying: "Blessed *is* the King who comes in the name of the LORD!" Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!" (**Luke 19:37-38**).

He makes no effort to dissuade the cheering crowds from calling Him a king.

And some of the Pharisees called to Him from the crowd, "Teacher, rebuke Your disciples." But He answered and said to them, "I tell you that if these should keep silent, the stones would immediately cry out" (**Luke 19:39-40**).

Jesus then showed deep sadness over what would happen to Jerusalem when it would in future be destroyed by the Romans forty years later where not one stone would be left on top of one another.

Now as He drew near, He saw the city and wept over it, saying, "If you had known, even you, especially in this your day, the things *that make* for your peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. For days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment around you, surround you and close you in on every side, and level you, and your children within you, to the ground; and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not know the time of your visitation" (**Luke 19:41-44**).

Even as they acknowledged Him so joyously at this moment in time He realised that their adoration would be short-lived and they would, for the most part, reject Him by His use of the phrase "because you did not know the time of your visitation." They didn't truly comprehend who He was and what His mission at this time was all about and their need to turn to God in true repentance.

The day of Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem is called Palm Sunday by mainstream Christianity. Was it on a Sunday or another day of the week?

The year in which Christ died was **30 AD**. The destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans occurred exactly 40 years later in **70 AD** – the number 40 being well known as a number of trial and testing. We are told that Jesus died on the day before the high day or annual sabbath referred to as Passover by the Jews but technically was the first day of Unleavened Bread. Christ died on the Passover as our Passover lamb.

In **30 AD** Passover or Nisan 14 occurred on a Wednesday with the annual sabbath or first day of Unleavened Bread falling on a Thursday. The plotting against Jesus spoken of in **Matthew 26:1-5** occurred two days before Passover on a Monday.

There are at least three overnight stays on and around the Mount of Olives that are recorded between the triumphal entry and this plotting that occurred on the Monday. Going back three days brings us to Friday. He went to Bethany just prior to the triumphal entry six days before Passover which was the Thursday. This means that the triumphal entry took place on a Thursday or a Friday.

Given the relative number of events between the second and third overnight stays compared to the other days it's my opinion that there was another overnight stay in between the second and third overnight stays that are recorded. It's my opinion that the triumphal entry occurred on a Thursday (Nisan 8).

After His first day in Jerusalem it says in **Matthew 21:17** that He lodged in Bethany. In **Luke 21:37** we read:

And in the daytime He was teaching in the temple, but at night He went out and stayed on the mountain called Olivet.

Soon after in **Matthew 26:6** we see him at the house of Simon the leper in Bethany. Bethany was on the SE foot of the Mount of Olives so it is quite likely that He may have spent all of His nights that week in Bethany which was on the Mount of Olives especially when we consider how close He was to Mary, Martha and Lazarus who lived in Bethany.

After his first night on the Mount of Olives He proceeded to make His way back to Jerusalem. While making His way across the Mount of Olives that morning He pronounced a curse on a fig tree. What was the true significance behind this event? Ernest Martin explains:

What happened to that fig tree four days before Jesus' crucifixion has a real bearing on the symbolism of the crucifixion itself. This can be shown because we now know that Jesus was executed on the Mount of Olives. The interesting thing is, the cursing of the fig tree and the impaling of Jesus to another tree (not a short distance away) has a remarkable parallel theme to events that occurred in the Garden of Eden with our first parents. Let us see how this is shown.

[A few days] days before his crucifixion, Jesus left Bethany and started walking towards Jerusalem. When he was near the summit of the Mount of Olives near the village of Bethphage (which means the House of Unripe Figs), he noticed on the side of the road a fig tree. He went to it and finding no figs on its branches (but the tree was Covered with leaves), he cursed that fig tree and said: "Let no man eat fruit from you henceforth forever. And his disciples heard it, (**Mark 11:14**). The cursing of that particular fig tree has baffled men ever since.

The truth is, even Mark said that "it was not the season of figs" (**Mark 11:13**). It was the time of "Unripe Figs." Indeed, it went further than that. It was not even the time for fig trees to have leaves in their fullness. It has puzzled people for generations why Jesus was so upset with a fig tree that by nature should not have had figs or leaves.

It is certain that the whole event was a miracle from start to finish. To produce a sign of this nature must have involved a great deal of symbolic importance. If it were not of major significance then the event makes little sense and certainly there would be little relevance for its occurrence. But it does have symbolic meaning...

Note that the next day after Jesus' cursing, the disciples found it withered (**Mark 11:20,22; Matthew 21:18-21**). What was significant about this? It meant that the type of tree that Adam and Eve first ate which brought sin and death to them (and in an extended sense to all humanity) was now withered and dead.

Tradition had it that the only tree under Adam's care in the Garden of Eden that did not shed its leaves after our first parents took of the fruit was the fig tree. It was the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. But with Jesus' miracle on the Mount of Olives, it meant that symbolic tree was now withered and dead. It signified that no longer would that symbolic tree be in the midst of humanity to encourage mankind to sin in the manner of our first parents. But there is even more teaching...

Jesus cursed that symbolic tree at the top of Olivet so that no man would eat of it again. And to complete his victory over sin, four days later Jesus was going to be sacrificed for the sins of the world just a few yards away from this withered and dead tree.

Also recall that this miracle of the withered fig tree also occurred adjacent to the village of Bethphage, which was a village of priests and the second court of the Sanhedrin...What Jesus was doing in the last week of his life on earth was acting out a symbolic victory over all the factors in the Garden of Eden around which our first parents failed, and showing that the Sanhedrin of the nation of Israel at Bethphage (the House of Unripe Figs) would also be withered and made dead.

The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil and the Sanhedrin Were now withered and dead and the Tree of Life a short distance away (probably an almond for the symbol to be carried out fully) became the very tree on which Jesus was crucified.

This did not take place within the former area of the Garden of Eden located hundreds of miles north east of Jerusalem, nor did it occur inside the Temple which typified the Garden and Eden. The miracle of these two trees happened "in the midst of the world" (near the outside Miphkad Altar which represented the altar promised to Cain and his descendants at the top of the Mount of Olives). The two trees on Olivet symbolized those two principal trees in the Garden of Eden which were now located in the "midst of the world" (**Golgotha p.387-390**).

On the day after His triumphal entry He did yet another provocative act by cleansing the Temple in anger with great force.

Then Jesus went into the temple and began to drive out those who bought and sold in the temple, and overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who sold doves. And He would not allow anyone to carry wares through the temple. Then He taught, saying to them, "Is it not written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations'? But you have made it a 'den of thieves.'" (**Mark 11:15-17**).

Ralph Van DerLaan, in his "Faith Lessons" DVD series shot on location in Israel suggests that one of the prime factors for why He took such offence was the attitude of Jews to do these things in the Court of Gentiles and disrupting their worship which they were entitled to. He says this because of the emphasis in the scripture He quoted about the Temple being a house for ALL nations.

The bulk of His teaching leading up to His final Passover occurred on the sabbath before the Passover. The day started with the amazement of the disciples at the withered fig tree. Jesus also used the incident to teach them of the importance of having deep faith in God to do anything on our behalf when we pray and ask according to His will.

He gave a number of parables that focused on the importance of obedience and not rejecting God and His ways. He gave the parable of the two sons, the wicked vinedressers and the wedding feast.

His message to the Pharisees and the religious establishment of the Jews was summed up with the following words:

Therefore I say to you, the Kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation bearing the fruits of it (**Matthew 21:43**).

We then answered three challenges from the Pharisees, Saducees and the lawyers. The first was on the issue of whether taxes should be paid. The Pharisees thought they had the perfect trap. If He said no they should pay taxes then they would use that against Him with the Roman authorities. If He said yes they thought He would lose popular favour with the people and turn them off Him. The masterful reply was:

Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's (**Matthew 22:21**).

Then the Saducees tried to tangle him on the nature of the resurrection of the dead and then a lawyer asked Him about which was the greatest commandment. His reply was:

The first of all the commandments is: 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.'

This is the first and great commandment. And the second, like it, is this: 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself' (**Mark 12:29-31**).

It's interesting that He answered the question by quoting not just one but two commandments. Though loving God is the greatest commandment it is inextricably linked to the other commandment of loving one's neighbour because the way we treat those God has created and also loves is an expression of our love for God.

Following the challenges from the self-righteous religious rulers and knowing that His death was very near He verbally unleashed His anger at them exposing them for the self-righteous religious hypocrites that they truly were with the woes that He pronounced on them. He really let them have it in front of all of the people.

Christ had put up with the hate-filled jealousy, self-righteousness and callousness of the Pharisees right throughout His ministry. His rebukes were minor compared to this fully-deserved onslaught He gave them right near the end of His ministry.

He showed great anger at the callous, "hyper"critical nature of the Pharisees. Insecurity and jealousy can do crazy things to people and these Pharisees had terribly hard hearts. Christ laid it on the line and called a spade a spade here. After rebuking the Pharisees He said with tremendous yearning in His heart:

O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under *her* wings, but you were not willing! See! Your house is left to you desolate; for I say to you, you shall see Me no more till you say, 'Blessed *is* He who comes in the name of the LORD!' (**Matthew 23:37-39**).

This scene was played incredibly well by the actor who played Christ in the Visual Bible video series. He gave the Pharisees plenty and with great feeling but it was still very much with a sense of a willingness to reconcile with them if they had not been so hard-hearted. After venting His anger at the Pharisees for unnecessarily being so hard-hearted he dropped to His knees and spoke of His yearning for the people of Jerusalem, and all Israel by extension, of how He only wanted to look after and do good to His people but they were not willing. At the end of His words He started to weep terribly and called for His disciples with His hands to come over and comfort Him. In **John 12:27-30** we read:

Now My soul is troubled, and what shall I say? 'Father, save Me from this hour'? But for this purpose I came to this hour. 'Father, glorify Your name.' Then a voice came from heaven, *saying*, 'I have both glorified *it* and will glorify *it* again.' Therefore the people who stood by and heard *it* said that it had thundered. Others said, 'An angel

has spoken to Him.’ Jesus answered and said, ‘This voice did not come because of Me, but for your sake.’

This one of only three occasions were human beings have audibly heard the voice of God the Father. This was to encourage the people to believe that He had sent Jesus. The same purpose was behind the other two occasions at Jesus’ baptism and the transfiguration when the Father said “This is my Beloved Son in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him.”

In the next chapter He gave the famous Olivet prophecy where He answered the twin questions the disciples posed to Him of when the Temple would be destroyed and what the signs would be leading up to the establishment of the Kingdom of God on earth. They thought the events would be simultaneous, not realizing the destruction of the Temple would occur in **70 AD** and the Kingdom would not come for another 2000 years.

Before they went up to the Mount of Olives they paid a visit to the Temple in Jerusalem where the disciples wanted to show Him the wonders of the Temple complex.

Then Jesus went out and departed from the temple, and His disciples came up to show Him the buildings of the temple. And Jesus said to them, ‘Do you not see all these things? Assuredly, I say to you, not *one* stone shall be left here upon another, that shall not be thrown down’ (**Matthew 24:1-2**).

How would Jesus have felt knowing the complete destruction of the Temple and Jerusalem and the great Dispersion of the Jewish people was less than a generation away?

In **Matthew 25:31-46** we read about the parable of the sheep and the goats:

When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory. All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides *his* sheep from the goats. And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left.

Then the King will say to those on His right hand, ‘Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; I *was* naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.’

Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed *You*, or thirsty and give *You* drink? When did we see You a stranger and take *You* in, or naked and clothe *You*? Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to *You*?’ And the King will answer and say to them, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did *it* to one of the least of these My brethren, you did *it* to Me.’

God takes it very personally the way we treat others, no matter how lowly and insignificant they are to others in society. This matter of hospitality and whether we do good to others or not is a major litmus test that God uses to determine if we fit to enter into His kingdom.

In **Matthew 26:6-13** we read of the story of the woman who anointed Jesus with costly fragrant oil.

And when Jesus was in Bethany at the house of Simon the leper, a woman came to Him having an alabaster flask of very costly fragrant oil, and she poured *it* on His head as He sat *at the table*. But when His disciples saw *it*, they were indignant, saying, 'Why this waste? For this fragrant oil might have been sold for much and given to *the poor*.'

But when Jesus was aware of *it*, He said to them, 'Why do you trouble the woman? For she has done a good work for Me. For you have the poor with you always, but Me you do not have always. For in pouring this fragrant oil on My body, she did *it* for My burial. Assuredly, I say to you, wherever this gospel is preached in the whole world, what this woman has done will also be told as a memorial to her.

Jesus was deeply appreciative of the reverent attitude of this unnamed woman. While a case could be made for the disciples point of view, Jesus was not the type of person who looked for reasons to criticize others. He actively went out of His way to point out good qualities in people that He met.

Jesus' Last Passover and Crucifixion

Before we read of the Passover in the gospels we have the account of Satan entering Judas (**Luke 22:3**) who went to the chief priests and scribes and offered to betray and hand over Jesus for a price to which they offered him 30 pieces of silver (**Matthew 26:15**).

There are more historical details that help us to better understand the betrayal of Jesus by Judas. Ernest Martin in the following quote tells us some more details behind the betrayal of Judas:

Note that after Jesus betrayed Jesus to the chief priests, they gave him thirty pieces of silver to hand Jesus over to them when there were no crowds around that might prevent His arrest (**Luke 22:6**). Later when Judas had realized what he had done (and became remorseful of it), he took those coins to the Temple and threw them over the floor of the naos. ([Though translated here as temple it is] a Greek word meaning the "holy place" into which only Aaronic priests could enter) (**Matthew 27:5**)...This verse shows that Judas was inside a part of the Temple which was reserved only for priests. It means that Judas was in fact "a priest"...

The preeminence of priests can explain the puzzle of who sat on Jesus left side and right side at the Last Supper. We know that John sat on one side because he was able to hear Jesus whisper a statement to Judas Iscariot that the other apostles did not hear, and we are told he was reclining in Jesus' bosom (**John 13:26**) - compare **John 13:26-28** where it shows how John was the only one who heard distinctly what Jesus said to Judas.

This indicates that Judas sat next to Jesus on the opposite side of John. And since it was customary for top priests to have the best positions at festivals or other functions, this shows that Judas (as a priest) was no doubt on Jesus' right side. (There is also evidence that the apostle John was a priest. See my book *Restoring the Original Bible* where this possibility is explained.) This makes the crime of Judas even more heinous. One of the persons ordained in the Old Testament to be an official representative for God was the very person to betray Jesus. Many are familiar with a common epithet that signifies the ecclesiastical rank of Judas. It is: "Judas Priest." These historical evidences show that Judas was in fact a priest.

What has this to do with the rituals of the Temple and the crucifixion of Jesus? Very much indeed. In the primary sin offering for the sins of a priest, a bullock was killed at the Altar of Burnt Offering at the entrance to the Holy Place and some of its blood was taken into the Holy Place and sprinkled before the inner curtain of the Temple

(Leviticus 4:6). A similar sin offering was that for the whole congregation of Israel **(verse 17).** The carcasses of these sin offerings were then taken up to the Miphkad Altar at the summit of Olivet and there they were burnt to ashes **(Leviticus 4:12, 21).**

With this in mind, we need to ask how the blood of those two sin offerings could represent the blood of Jesus in his atoning sacrifice for sin because Jesus' literal blood was not taken into the Holy Place and sprinkled before the inner curtain.

No, but the thirty shekels that Judas obtained (no doubt from moneys deposited in the Temple treasury) were reckoned by the chief priests to be "blood money" **(Matthew 27:6-8).** Importantly, we have seen in **Matthew 27:5** that Judas the priest scattered the thirty shekels (representing the blood of Jesus) while he was within the very Holy Place where the priests sprinkled the blood of the sin offerings which we have just mentioned **(Leviticus 4:1-21).** This would have been, in a symbolic sense, an official sprinkling of the blood of Jesus by an ordained priest (Judas) within the actual place ordained by Moses.

Again, the symbolic parallel is too close for these circumstances to be coincidental. At least the apostles must have understood that this was a priestly requirement of the Law of Moses that was being carried out by Judas the priest **(Golgotha p.397-399).**

Judas was a pawn in Satan's hand. Judas was not an upright priest to begin with as he embezzled some of the money that he was given responsibility over **(John 12:6).** His motives were selfish but he was not incorrigible. His betrayal was probably done as a means to an end. He preferred not to betray Jesus but was probably motivated to do it to force Jesus to use His powers and bring about the revolution to free the Jews. He would lusted for the power that He would have had in such a government as one of the leading apostles.

After his betrayal he soon realised events backfired on him badly and they would go in a completely different direction to what he hoped that they would. Despite his greed and lust for power he had enough conscience to regret betraying innocent blood. Such was the great remorse he had that he hanged himself. His was a tortured soul but he would be just one of many who would have hand in the murder of Jesus.

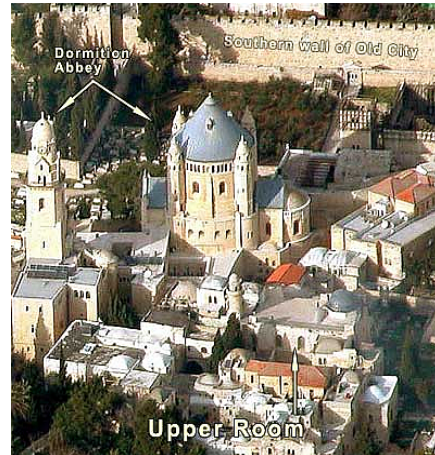
Unwilling to use "blood money" for the Temple, the priests bought a potter's field, which became known as the "Field of Blood" **(Matthew 27:3-10).** This field is traditionally located at the point where the Kidron, Tyropoeon, and Hinnom valleys come together (Smith's Bible Dictionary, Article – Judas Iscariot).

In **Luke 22:7-13** we read:

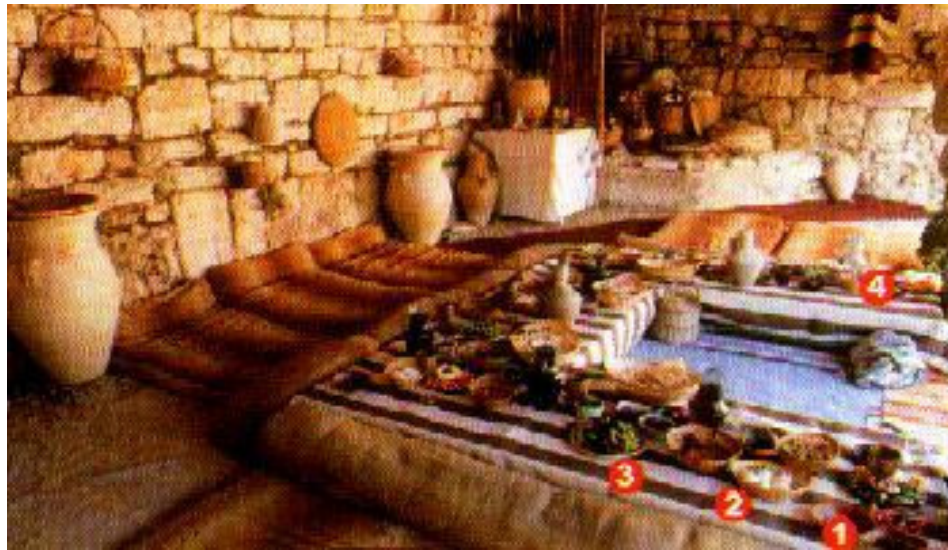
Then came the Day of Unleavened Bread, when the Passover must be killed. And He sent Peter and John, saying, "Go and prepare the Passover for us, that we may eat." So they said to Him, "Where do You want us to prepare?" And He said to them, "Behold, when you have entered the city, a man will meet you carrying a pitcher of water; follow him into the house which he enters. Then you shall say to the master of the house, 'The Teacher says to you, "Where is the guest room where I may eat the Passover with My disciples?"' Then he will show you a large, furnished upper room; there make ready." So they went and found it just as He had said to them, and they prepared the Passover.

Where was this upper room? Traditionally the Upper Room where Jesus kept His last Passover is thought to have been located in the Upper City. Given it was a two-story house it may have been in that wealthy part of the city but there is no way of knowing for sure.

According to Dr Jim Fleming on the website for the Bible Resources Study Center in Jerusalem (http://www.biblicalresources.net/last_supper.htm) the traditional Jewish Passover in Jesus' day was most often kept seating at a triclinium and that the chief seats were not in the centre but were on the right of the table. On the website for the Bible Resources Study Center we read the following information about the last Passover of Jesus:

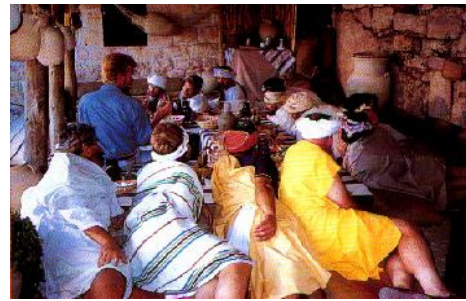


Seating at a triclinium (three-sided table) was according to a traditional plan. The places of greater honor were to the left, and those of lesser honor to the right. It was these places of greater honor that Jesus counseled against selecting at a feast, "lest someone more distinguished than you may have been invited...and then in disgrace you proceed to occupy the last place" (**Luke 14:8-9**).



This may actually have happened the night of Jesus' last Passover. Having helped prepare the Passover, Peter may have expected to sit in a place of honor near Jesus (3). Yet, he had to gesture and call across the table (4) to John (2) to ask Jesus a question (**John 13:24**). Jesus may have seated Judas in a place of honor (1) [where he could reach him with the morsel dipped in stew, **John 13:26**], displacing Peter.

This accounts for the description of John "reclining on Jesus' chest" (**John 13:23**). John must have been reclining in the place to the right of Jesus. Guest at a reclining meal laid on their left side, propped up by their left elbow and cushions, and ate with their right hand. This accounts for the description of John "reclining on Jesus' chest" (**John 13:23**). John must have been reclining in the place to the right of Jesus.



Matthew, Mark and Luke record the giving of the new symbols Jesus gave for the Passover – eating of the bread and the wine symbolising His body being broken and blood shed for the sins of mankind. Those three gospels do not record the footwashing. John's gospel gives the footwashing account but do not cover the giving of the bread and the wine as new symbols.

Before describing the rest of the account of the Last Supper or Passover including the footwashing and the announcement of one to betray him **John 13:2** says "and supper being ended". The Greek tense here used by John is "aorist" tense, which signifies a completed action in the past, an event already finished in the past. Because of this some have concluded that the footwashing occurred after the giving of the bread and the wine not before.

The Greek word for being ended can also be translated as "be made" or "been made". The supper had "been made". There are two other possibilities for how **John 13:2** can be interpreted which don't require the footwashing to have occurred after the bread and the wine. One is that "supper being ended" means "supper being made" and was now ready to be eaten. This is more likely because one would wash feet and clean one's self up before any eating took place. The other possibility is that supper being ended refers to the eating of the lamb was completed and that the bread and wine was something completely separate from the Passover supper.

The order of events on the night when properly put together and harmonised from the four gospels is as follows -:

The footwashing (**John 13:2-20**).

Jesus announces that one of them would betray him (**Matthew 26:20-22; Mark 14:18-19, John 13:21-22**).

Jesus changes of the symbols of the Passover to the bread and the wine (**Matthew 26:26-29; Mark 14:22-25, Luke 22:17-20**).

Jesus points out Judas as his betrayer (**Matthew 26:23-25; Mark 14:20-21; Luke 22:21-23, John 13:23-30**).

Jesus gives His last teachings to His disciples closing with the real Lord's prayer of **John 17** and a hymn (**John 13:31-17:26**).

The disciples cross the Kidron Valley and go to the Garden of Gethsemane (**Matthew 26:30, John 18:1-2**).

Matthew and Mark have the order of the bread and wine event as Jesus eating the bread and saying it is His body, taking the cup, giving thanks for it, sharing the cup with His disciples, saying it was His blood and then saying He would not drink of the vine again until the Kingdom comes (**Matthew 26:26-29; Mark 14:22-25**).

Luke has a slightly different order. He has Jesus giving thanks over the wine and dividing it amongst the disciples, then Jesus eating the bread and saying it is His body and then He comes back to the wine saying that it was His blood (**Luke 22:17-20**).

Judas was there to eat the bread and the wine and he left after Jesus pointed Him out to John as his betrayer and before Jesus started giving His last teachings (**John 13:23-30**).

It appears the next thing that happened after Judas left was Luke's record of a dispute over who would be greatest in the Kingdom which Jesus quelled by saying that they have to act as servants not overlords before saying that they would receive thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel (**Luke 22:24-30**). He then spoke of being with them only a little while longer before giving the new commandment of loving others as he had loved them (**John 13:31-35**).

Following that came the event where Jesus said that Peter would deny Him three times (**Matthew 26:31-35, Mark 14:27-31, Luke 22:31-34, John 13:36-38**). The next event was Jesus asking them to bring a money bag, a sack and a sword so the prophecy could be fulfilled that said that He would be numbered amongst the transgressors (**Luke 22:35-38**). Following on from that are the teachings of **John 14 to 16** starting with Jesus saying that He was going to prepare a place for Him.

At this last Passover that He kept before He was delivered up and killed on the cross His feelings must have been very heavy at this time knowing the incredible agony He would soon go through was only hours away.

The Passover was killed "between the evenings" or at twilight – the period of about an hour between sunset and complete darkness. The lamb had to be bled, skinned and then roasted whole. This all took a period of a few hours so the time that the lamb and the supper was fully made (**John 13:2**) and they were ready to eat was probably somewhere between 9 and 10pm.

They had the meal probably completed by 11pm and the final teachings probably lasted another hour or so before they went across the Kidron Valley to Gethsemane. Gethsemane was probably fairly close to the southern summit on the Mount of Olives. If they kept the Passover in the Upper City that is quite a long walk – between half an hour and an hour. It may well have been about 2am when Jesus was praying in the garden hence the sleepiness of the disciples.

Now that we've looked at the order of the events of the Jesus' last Passover let's now at look at each of the events in a little more in detail.

The first thing Jesus did when the meal was ready to eat was with the feet of the disciples as an example of what we should do for one another. Footwashing teaches the lesson of humility and being willing to do the lowest of tasks for our fellow brethren. It also reminds us we need to be clean from our contact with this world symbolised by the feet touching the ground. We have been bathed all over and cleansed at baptism. We need only to clean our feet from our contact with the world after that (**John 13:2-11**).

Once their feet were clean Jesus came out with a shocking revelation that one of His disciples would betray Him, a revelation which surprised and saddened the rest of the disciples. He had grown very close to this inner circle of disciples who He had chosen, including Judas Iscariot. There has been speculation that Judas was trying to force Jesus' hand to lead a revolt against the Romans by betraying Him and that events simply spun out of control into a scenario that Judas never expected would happen. Perhaps this helps to

explain Judas' remorse and suicide later on. Jesus may have realized he was a pawn in a much grander plan being manipulated by Satan and the Pharisees.

It would have been a deeply moving night for Jesus as He instituted the new symbols for the Passover of the bread and the wine knowing His body would be soon shred to pieces and His blood spilled to pay for the sins of all mankind. He then closed the occasion by saying:

I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom (**Matthew 26:29**).

The time where He could interact with these twelve dear friends of His was drawing to a close. He was looking forward to the time when He could share a drink of wine with these friends of His in His Father's kingdom when they would reign over the tribes of Israel.

Jesus then repeated His shocking statement that one of the twelve would betray Him. After he did so Peter motioned to John to ask Jesus who it was who would betray Him and Jesus obliged with an answer that it would be the one He would give a piece of bread to which was Judas. Judas then left after Jesus told him to do what He would do quickly.

Amazingly there then came another dispute over who would be greatest in the Kingdom. At that time they thought that the establishment of the kingdom would be very shortly away in their lifetime.

Jesus then spoke of being with them only a little while longer before giving the new commandment of loving others as He had loved them (**John 13:31-35**). Think of the incredible way that Christ loved His disciples and how much He had raised the bar of how to love. Asking us to love one another in that extra deep way is what was so new about that "old" commandment. Following that came the event where Jesus said that Peter would deny Him three times.

Then Jesus said to them, 'All of you will be made to stumble because of Me this night, for it is written: 'I will strike the Shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.' But after I have been raised, I will go before you to Galilee.' Peter answered and said to Him, 'Even if all are made to stumble because of You, I will never be made to stumble.' Jesus said to him, 'Assuredly, I say to you that this night, before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times.' Peter said to Him, 'Even if I have to die with You, I will not deny You!' And so said all the disciples (**Matthew 26:31-35**).

In the parallel account in Luke we read:

And the Lord said, 'Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift *you* as wheat. But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to *Me*, strengthen your brethren.' But he said to Him, 'Lord, I am ready to go with You, both to prison and to death.' Then He said, I tell you, Peter, the rooster shall not crow this day before you will deny three times that you know Me' (**Luke 22:31-34**).

Jesus knew His disciples better than they knew themselves. He knew just how frail spiritually they were and that they would all desert Him which came to pass soon after. Peter at least stuck around but even he would betray Him and he would do so three times as God brought

about three situations which would test whether or not he would confess he was linked to Jesus or not. Did Satan drop in on God's throne in heaven again like he did in Job's day and ask for Peter? It appears from Christ's words that he may have.

Jesus, knowing that Peter would deny Him three times, does say something encouraging which may not have sunk into Peter's mind till much later. He said when you have returned to me strengthen your brethren. He didn't say if, He said when. Jesus was fully confident that Peter would repent after his three time denial. He remembers that we are but dust and He also shows faith in our ability to succeed with His help.

In **John 14 to 16** Jesus in His last address to His disciples before He would be crucified spoke about the following:

Preparing a place for them in His future kingdom (**John 14:1-6**)

Asking for anything in His name (**John 14:12-14**)

Loving Him meant keeping His commandments (**John 14:15**)

The promise of the Holy Spirit allowing Jesus and the Father to dwell in us (**John 14:16-26**)

The gift of His inner peace (**John 14:27-31**)

Jesus is the true vine and we must abide in Him and bear fruit of christian growth (**John 15:1-8**)

Love is keeping the commandments which are an expression of love and that no greater love is their than to lie down one's life for his friends (**John 15:9-17**)

He called them His friends and shared with them all His Father wanted to share with them (**John 15:14-17**)

The world will hate us as they hated Him (**John 15:18-16:4**)

How the Holy Spirit will be our Helper and comforter (**John 14:26, 15:5-15**)

How their great sorrow to come will turn to joy like a woman giving birth (**John 16:16-33**)

There are great central themes that run through these last words He had for them before His crucifixion that reveal the deepest thoughts He most wanted to convey to them before He went away back to the Father. There are themes of hope and encouragement, love, peace, friendship, unity and joy.

He gives them the hope of the coming Kingdom, He encourages them to love Him by not giving lip service to His teachings but actually living them, wholeheartedly living by His loving commandments and laying down their lives for one another and bearing fruits of christian growth.

He encouraged Him to be united and that He would always be with them through His Holy Spirit by which He would live in them. He finished off by encouraging them that the sorrow that would soon come over them would be turned to great joy and then prayed that God would keep them and all believers from that time forward unified in His name.

In **John 14:1-3** we read:

Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions; if *it were* not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, *there* you may be also.

When he speaks of preparing a place for us Jesus here is using a wonderful bridal analogy. A Jewish housing complex with houses (units) built around a central courtyard was called an insula. When a man married a girl they would build another house attached to the house of

the man's parents house/unit. He would negotiate a bride price, they would exchange a glass of wine to seal the deal and then the man would go to His father's place and build a new house (unit) next to his father's place. This might take many months. The bride would have no idea how long it would take.

He would be anxious to go back to his bride. He might ask his father if he could go to her and the father might say, "Not until you've finished the house. You can't bring her back to half-built house." This is reminiscent of the verse where Jesus says only His father knew when He could come back to His bride.

After he had finished the house they would blow the shophar and it would be time for the wedding. There might be several brides waiting for their bridegroom in one of these insulars. Not knowing who it was who was about to be married they might suddenly have to get their stuff together and be ready for the bridegroom reminiscent of the parable of the 10 virgins.

The bride and groom would go into a room together to consummate the wedding. The best man would stand at the door listening for when it had been consummated and they were ready to be announced husband and wife by the best man, similar to John the Baptist saying that he was the friend who stands at the door and has the privilege of hearing Christ's voice. After then there would be a seven day wedding feast (not unlike the Feast of Tabernacles).

Jesus had paid the brideprice - His life. He tells us that in His Father's house there are many rooms - a big insula. One day we'll be all together with Christ and the Father in the courtyard of His insula - the New Jerusalem.

Most harmonies of the gospels place the teachings and "Lord's prayer" of **John 14 to 17** as occurring at Gethsemane. It can be plainly shown that those things were said at the last Passover in the Upper Room just by reading **John 18:1** which follow those events:

When Jesus had spoken these words, He went out with His disciples over the Brook Kidron, where there was a garden, which He and His disciples entered.

The Brook Kidron was the Kidron Valley which sometimes flowed with water and was spanned by a two-tiered bridge called the Bridge of the Red Heifer.

Then Jesus came with them to a place called Gethsemane, and said to the disciples, "Sit here while I go and pray over there" (**Matthew 26:36**).

It is called a garden in **John 18:1** but the Greek is better translated as an orchard, presumably an orchard where olive trees grew which was near an olive press which is what Gethsemane means. After olives were ground by a millstone that was rolled on a circular stone platform the crushed olives were put under a great heavy olive stone press which drained the olive oil out of the olives. Jesus was greatly pressed in the garden by the weight of what was to happen to Him and the sins of the world He was about to carry on the cross. He was greatly pressed to the point He dripped blood from the stress of it all. It was our sins that weighed and pressed Him. After they had gone up to the Mount of Olives we read:

Then He said to them, 'My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death. Stay here and watch with Me.' He went a little farther and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, 'O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but

as You *will*.' Then He came to the disciples and found them asleep, and said to Peter, 'What? Could you not watch with Me one hour? Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed *is* willing, but the flesh *is* weak.' Again, a second time, He went away and prayed, saying, 'O My Father, if this cup cannot pass away from Me unless I drink it, Your will be done' (**Matthew 26:38-42**)

Jesus was incredibly stressed and sorrowful at just how much pain He knew He was about to go. He may have been God in the flesh but He was very much human as well and scared to death by the amount of pain that He was soon to go through. The first time He approaches His Father in prayer He asked if it was possible that this cup of suffering could pass from Him. Was there another way to achieve what needed to be done without having to go through this suffering? He desperately wanted to not go through the pain if there was another way but there was no other way. His resolve is strengthened when He realizes there is no other way and this is reflected in His next statement. Rather than asking if it possible that there is a way out, He says if there is no other way then your will be done.

And He [Jesus] said, 'Abba, Father, all things *are* possible for You. Take this cup away from Me; nevertheless, not what I will, but what You *will*' (**Mark 14:36**).

Jesus here in this moment of great pain calls out to the Father and calls Him "Abba". Now, the word Abba here is not a reference to Anna, Benny, Bjorn and Agnetha of the 70's Swedish pop group but is an Aramaic word. It has a special intimate personal feeling to it much like our English words Papa or Daddy. It highlights the incredible deep and personal connection that Jesus had with the Father.

Then Judas, having received a detachment *of troops*, and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, came there with lanterns, torches, and weapons. Jesus therefore, knowing all things that would come upon Him, went forward and said to them, "Whom are you seeking?" They answered Him, "Jesus of Nazareth." Jesus said to them, "I am *He*." And Judas, who betrayed Him, also stood with them. Now when He said to them, "I am *He*," they drew back and fell to the ground. Then He asked them again, "Whom are you seeking?" And they said, "Jesus of Nazareth." Jesus answered, "I have told you that I am *He*. Therefore, if you seek Me, let these go their way,"

When Jesus asks them who they sought he says three times "I am *He*". In most Bibles the word "*He*" is italicized showing us that it is not in the original Greek so Jesus actually said "I am" three times. Again He was emphasising that He was the great "I am" that spoke to Moses through the burning bush.

Now His betrayer had given them a sign, saying, 'Whomever I kiss, He is the One; seize Him.' Immediately he went up to Jesus and said, 'Greetings, Rabbi!' and kissed Him. But Jesus said to him, 'Friend, why have you come?' Then they came and laid hands on Jesus and took Him. And suddenly, one of those *who were* with Jesus stretched out *his* hand and drew his sword, struck the servant of the high priest, and cut off his ear. But Jesus said to him, 'Put your sword in its place, for all who take the sword will perish by the sword. Or do you think that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He will provide Me with more than twelve legions of angels? How then could the Scriptures be fulfilled, that it must happen thus?' In that hour Jesus said to the multitudes, 'Have you come out, as against a robber, with swords and clubs to take Me? I sat daily with you, teaching in the temple, and you did not seize Me. But all this

was done that the Scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled.' Then all the disciples forsook Him and fled (**Matthew 26:48-56**).

When Peter struck off the ear of the high priest called Malchus in **John 18:10** he probably swung horizontally trying to cut his whole head off but missed as he turned his head on his side only to lose the ear which Jesus healed (**Luke 22:51**).

What would it feel like knowing that He could back out of it at any time? Had he decided He did not want to voluntarily go through with the crucifixion He could have called upon 12 legions of angels (60 000 angels) to prevent His arrest. After they arrested Him all His disciples deserted Him to add insult to injury.

After Jesus was arrested, Annas examined Him alone (**John 18:13-24**). He was ex-High Priest. They next took Him to the High Priest Caiaphas before sunrise while it was not yet light (**Matthew 26:57**). After sunrise, the Sanhedrin quickly condemned Him formally to death for blasphemy (**Matthew 26:59-68**). Then they took Him to Pilate on different charges of treason so that the Romans could be seen to be the ones to condemn Him (**Luke 23:1-4, John 18:29-38**).

In Mel Gibson's "The Passion of the Christ" the trial is an open trial with lots of the general public watching on. This is far from the truth. They feared the people would turn on them if they tried to put Him to death. That is why it was done privately and secretly away from the people and why they tried to get the Romans to put Him to death.

Since the trial of Jesus took place at the time of Passover, there can be no doubt that Caiaphas (along with his deputy Annas) were then away from their ordinary homes (or houses) and they were then resident in the Upper Chambers within the Temple adjacent to the Chamber of Hewn Stones where the Sanhedrin met.

As a matter of fact, we have New Testament evidence that the "House of Caiaphas" at the time of Jesus' trial was his "Temple House" and not his regular one on the southwest hill. Note that when false witnesses accused Jesus at Caiaphas' House they said: "We heard him say I will throw down THIS Temple that was made with hands and in three days I will build another not made with hands" (**Mark 14:58**). It is important to realize that they did not say "the Temple," as though it was situated at a distance from them. They referred to it as "this Temple," which means they were then situated within the Temple complex itself...

These "Houses" of the priests abutting to the Chamber of Hewn Stones (the Sanhedrin) were built on the second story around and above a courtyard of columns below. Remarkably, the New Testament states specifically that Jesus was taken into the Upper Chamber of the High Priest's house while Peter had to stay below near the vestibule of the courtyard (**Mark 14:66**). This answers precisely to the description of the second story residences for the High Priest (and other priestly dignitaries) which the Mishnah shows were supported by columns over a courtyard (**Golgotha, p.116, 114**).

After Peter denied Jesus three times just as Jesus told him he would:

"the Lord turned and looked at Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how He had said to him, 'Before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times'" (**Luke 22:61**).

How must have Peter have felt at this moment? He was crushed that he had done such a thing and it must have been like a dagger through the heart when Christ looked at him at the very moment the rooster crowed and he had just betrayed him for the third time. Jesus knows what it feels like to be abandoned as all the disciples abandoned Him at the moment he “needed” them most.

During his trial Jesus said nothing and only spoke when the high priest adjured him which meant He had to answer the question by law. His response was very interesting.

And the high priest arose and said to Him, ‘Do You answer nothing? What *is it* these men testify against You?’ But Jesus kept silent. And the high priest answered and said to Him, ‘I put You under oath by the living God: Tell us if You are the Christ, the Son of God!’ Jesus said to him, ‘*It is as you said*. Nevertheless, I say to you, hereafter you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven’ **(Matthew 26:62-64)**.



When He finally answers He doesn't just say the bare minimum but is deliberately provocative with His words. He says that not only is He the Christ but that they would see Him sitting at the right Hand of God and coming on the clouds of heaven. To the Jewish religious leaders this was like the straw that broke the camel's back and they instantly condemned Him to death in their insane jealousy.

Dr Herman Hoeh in the WCG reprint article “Twelve Reasons Why Jesus’ Trial Was Illegal” says the following about the charges that were brought against Jesus and the reason for His crucifixion:

“According to the common view”, reports Mr Husband in his book [The Prosecution of Jesus], page 210, “the right to try capital cases”, that is, cases involving death penalties, “and even the right to pronounce sentences, still rested with the Sanhedrin but the actual penalty could not be inflicted until the governor” that is, the Roman governor – in this case Pilate, “had given his sanction.”

But this view is not true. The Jews not only had the power to convict and the power to execute in all but cases of treason or sedition. The assumption that the Jews had no power to execute is incorrectly based on **John 18:31-32**. Here the Jews had said that, “It is not lawful for us to put any man to death.” Lifting it out of its context, critics have assumed that the Jews had no lawful right whatsoever to put anyone to death. But this does not happen to be the case. Have we forgotten how Stephen died? The Jews said, “He blasphemes” and they stoned him to death. The Romans didn't disapprove...

The Jews brought to Jesus a woman who was committing adultery...Jesus accepted the fact that they had the right to execute adulteresses and other criminals. He told the guiltless to cast the first stone!...

“From the earliest period the Roman governor took cognizance of all matters that had any relation to the public security or the majesty of the Empire. Consequently there was no time at which the Roman magistrate would not step in when a charge of treason was made or a seditious movement begun. The case against Jesus is one

especially in point, for the charge against him [treason] could under no circumstances be tried by any tribunal except that of the governor”...

The Jews accused Jesus of blasphemy but they did not want to execute Him [He was too popular with the people who would have turned on the priests so they tried Him privately and secretly and had the Romans appear to condemn Him and not themselves]. So they charged Him with treason before the Romans.

What the Jewish religious leaders had to do was to trump up charges of treason against Christ in order to bring it up to Pilate so that they would appear not to be responsible for His death.

Jesus was quite different from other revolutionaries. He was law-abiding, positive towards Romans, not against taxes and, most of all, He discouraged violence. Compared to the many other false messiahs around the time the Romans which were violent revolutionaries Jesus was much more favoured by the Romans.

Pilate was in the Praetorium situated where the Dome of the Rock is today. Probably around 7am he was disturbed by a message from the chief priests to come out to them and deal with this “criminal”.

Then they led Jesus from Caiaphas to the Praetorium, and it was early morning. But they themselves did not go into the Praetorium, lest they should be defiled, but that they might eat the Passover (**John 18:28**).

Since the priests did not go into Fort Antonia lest they be ceremonially defiled where was this meeting place just outside the Praetorium where Pilate addressed the Jews and eventually condemned Jesus to crucifixion? The place where this occurred most likely was at the southern stairs unearthed outside the southern wall of the Haram that was found during the archaeological dig.



Despite being known for his ruthlessness Pilate resisted as much as He could the hot potato of condemning Jesus. This seems odd unless you understand the geopolitical situation that existed between Rome and Parthia at the time which we looked at earlier. Pilate wanted to keep the peace with the Parthians and didn't want antagonise the Parthians.

Stephen Collins in his book “The Lost Ten Tribes of Israel...Found!” documents what possibly may be an extra-biblical letter from Jesus to a Parthian vassal king:

Eusebius was a famous Christian historian who lived from **260 A.D.** until **340 A.D.**...Eusebius was not a man given to wild claims. Let us examine his own words about the exchange between King Abgar of Edessa and Jesus Christ. Eusebius begins: ‘..when King Abgar, the brilliantly successful monarch of the peoples of Mesopotamia, who was dying from a terrible physical disorder which no human power could heal, heard continual mention of the name of Jesus and unanimous tribute to His miracles, he sent a humble request to him by a letter-carrier, begging relief from his disease.’

This record that news of Jesus' miracles was commonly heard in Parthia's western provinces confirms that the trade routes must have been full of news about Jesus'

exploits. The following excerpt from King Abgar's letter to Jesus is taken from Eusebius' account:

'Abgar...to Jesus, who has appeared as a gracious saviour in the region of Jerusalem--greeting. I have heard about you and about the cures you perform...If the report is true, you make the blind see again and the lame walk about; you cleanse lepers...and raise the dead...? I concluded that...either you are God and came down from heaven to do these things, or you are God's Son doing them. Accordingly I am writing you to beg you to come to me, whatever the inconvenience, and cure the disorder from which I suffer.. I may add that I understand the Jews are treating you with contempt and desire to injure you: my city is very small, but highly esteemed, adequate for both of us.'

The reports heard by Abgar closely parallel the narratives in the Gospel accounts about the miracles of Jesus. King Abgar professes his faith in Jesus, is desperate for Jesus to come, and offers him refuge in Edessa from the risks faced by Jesus in Jerusalem. It is remarkable that Eusebius preserved for us a record that Jesus was given an official offer of sanctuary in Parthian territory from the dangers he faced in Jerusalem. According to Eusebius the reply was sent by Jesus Christ himself to King Abgar by a courier named Ananias.

'Happy are you who believed in me without having seen me! For it is written of me that those who have seen me will not believe in me, and those who have not seen me will believe and live. As to your request that I should come to you, I must complete all that I was sent to do here, and on completing it must at once be taken up to the One who sent me. When I have been taken up I will send you one of my disciples to cure your disorder and bring life to you and those with you.'

This letter attributed to Jesus would have been about three hundred years old when Eusebius read it in the Royal Records of Edessa, and it reflects a doctrine and attitude entirely compatible with that expressed by Jesus in the Gospel accounts...There is more to the story. According to Eusebius, the archives of Edessa revealed that after Jesus' death and resurrection Thaddaeus (mentioned in **Mark 3:18**) was sent by the Apostle Thomas to Edessa. Once there, he not only healed many of King Abgar's subjects, but also laid hands on King Abgar himself and healed the king. King Abgar ordered his subjects to assemble and hear the preaching of Thaddaeus, and offered him silver and gold (which Thaddaeus refused). King Abgar is quoted as stating to Thaddaeus:

'I believed in Him (Jesus) so strongly that I wanted to take an army and destroy the Jews who crucified Him, if I had not been prevented by the imperial power of Rome to do so.'

Remarkable! Here is a record of a Parthian vassal king wishing to mount a military campaign to punish those responsible for crucifying Jesus Christ...This account confirms that Jesus had strong supporters within the Parthian Empire, justifying Rome's reluctance to interfere with his life" (p.303-306).

Rome was reluctant to interfere with Jesus given His Parthian connections. Jesus was accused by the chief priests to Pilate of treason and sedition. Pilate took Jesus in and tried Him and when he realized Jesus was not planning some overthrow and that His kingdom was not of this time or world he said that they had no case against Jesus (**John 18:33-38**). When Pilate declared "I found no fault in Him at all" (**John 18:38**) he pronounced that Jesus was a Passover lamb without blemish.

The priests continued to push the case and when Pilate found out He was a Galilean he passed Him onto Herod Antipas, the ruler of Galilee and Perea (east of the Jordan) who was in Jerusalem for the Passover festival (**Luke 23:5-7**). Herod asked a few idle questions and

passed the hot potato back to Pilate (**Luke 23:8-12**). Because of the political situation between Rome and Parthia Pilate did not want to create an incident with Parthia by condemning Jesus but the Jews backed him into a corner.

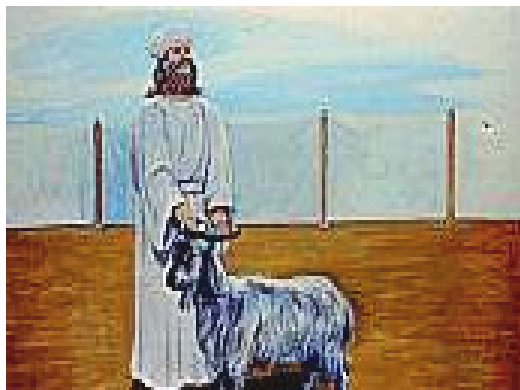
His next move was to offer His release as part of a Passover tradition to release one prisoner to them of their choice. He asked them to choose between Jesus and a known murderer by the name of Barabbas. Ernest Martin writes the following between this choice the Jews had and the symbolism of the Day of Atonement:

There is another symbolic parallel to the events of the crucifixion that should be mentioned. It was then the custom in Jerusalem of releasing a notable prisoner during the season of Passover. Pilate wanted to restore Jesus to the people, but they demanded that he release a man called Barabbas. This person was a prominent prisoner (**Matthew 27:16**) who had been charged with the crimes of sedition and murder (**Mark 15:7; Luke 23:18,19**). This could well mean that he was some kind of revolutionary hero to the Jews - one who endeavored to overthrow the Roman yoke and bring in the expected Jewish domination over the Middle East and the world...

Now to an interesting point in regard to this Barabbas. In some important manuscripts of **Matthew 27:16-17** Barabbas is given a first name. Ironically, it was Jesus. The fact that there were biblical texts that called Barabbas by his first name Jesus was noted by Origen (early third century). It was Origen's opinion that it was not proper to call him Jesus because he was not aware of any sinner in Scripture who had ever been called by such an august name. The truth is, however, the majority of scholars who comprised the United Bible Societies' committee to judge the genuineness of New Testament texts believed that Jesus Barabbas was the original reading (Metzger, Textual Commentary, pp.67,68).

This information provides us with more ironical comparisons. The name "Barabbas" was a title and meant: "The Son of the Father." In this case, the name signified "The Son of the High Father" (like that which Paul used in **Romans 8:15** and **Galatians 4:6** where he referred to God as "Abba, Father"). It was also used by Jesus on the eve of his crucifixion: "Abba, Father, all things are possible unto you; take away this cup from me: nevertheless not what I will, but what you will" (**Mark 14:36**). The word "Abba" in these usages signified the Exalted Father, and meant none other than God the Father. Thus, the name and title of Barabbas, by interpretation, meant: "Jesus, the Son of the High Father."

What a paradox. Here were two men. One was a seditionist and murderer and the other in New Testament interpretation as the sinless Son of God - and both with the same name and title. And who did the authorities choose to be released? They selected the criminal, while the Jesus who was the actual "Son of the High Father" was led out to be crucified between two robbers.



The recording of this unique situation may have been intended by the writers of the New Testament to show the fulfillment of a most unusual ritual that occurred on the Day of Atonement. On that day two identical goats were selected. There was not the slightest difference between them as far as appearance was concerned. They were brought into the Temple and lots were drawn over them.

One became a goat designated as "the Lord's" and the other was "the Azazel" (the goat of the evil one). The goat selected to be "the Lord's" was killed, its blood sprinkled in the Holy of Holies and its carcass was taken to the Miphkad Altar on the Mount of Olives and burnt to ashes (**Leviticus 16:27**). The other goat was led away into the wilderness by the hand of a fit man and let go alive in that desolate area as commanded in the original Law of Moses (**Leviticus 16:20-22**) (**Golgotha p.394-395**).

The Jewish crowd was stacked with people who would vote the way that the priests wanted and they called for not just the release of Barabbas but followed on afterwards by demanding Jesus be crucified (**Matthew 27:17-23, Luke 23:19-25**). Hoping to quell the demands for Him to be crucified Pilate had him chastised by scourging with the intent to release Him afterwards (**Luke 23:22**).

Jesus was very severely scourged, so much so that He could carry His cross all the way to the crucifixion site (**Mark 15:21**). The soldiers in the Praetorium (the Haram) beat and spat at Him and beat a crown of thorns over His head as they mocked Him and put a royal purple robe on Him (**Mark 15:15-20**). Pilate then brought Jesus back out after His brutal scourging hoping the Jews would be satisfied but they continued to persist that Jesus be crucified and it looked like it would become a riot if Pilate refused to give in to their demands.

The Pilate went out again and said to them, Behold I bring Him out to you, so that you may know that I do not find any fault in Him. And then Jesus went out wearing a crown of thorns and the purple cloak and he said to them, 'Behold the man!' (**John 19:4-5**).

Pilate again pronounced Him innocent like a lamb without blemish. The crowd continued to demand His crucifixion and then manipulated him into finally giving Him by saying he would setting himself against Jesus by releasing one who proclaimed Himself a king against Caesar's authority.

Pilate made a public showing that he found Jesus and the blood of this innocent man was by their demands and on their head and not his. This dramatic event probably occurred at the south entrance to Fort Antonio where the southern steps have been unearthed.

Now Pilate, seeing that he was accomplishing nothing but that a riot was developing instead took water and washed his hands before the multitude saying, 'I am guiltless of the blood of this righteous man; you see to it.' And all the people answered and said, 'His blood be on us and on our children' (**Matthew 27:24-25**).

Jesus was led off to be crucified at 9 am where he spent six gruelling hours on the cross before He died.

The following short articles by the Mayo Clinic document medically what the scourging and crucifixion of Jesus Christ was like. Some of the details may be disturbing so some readers may find the need to skip this section.

Scourging

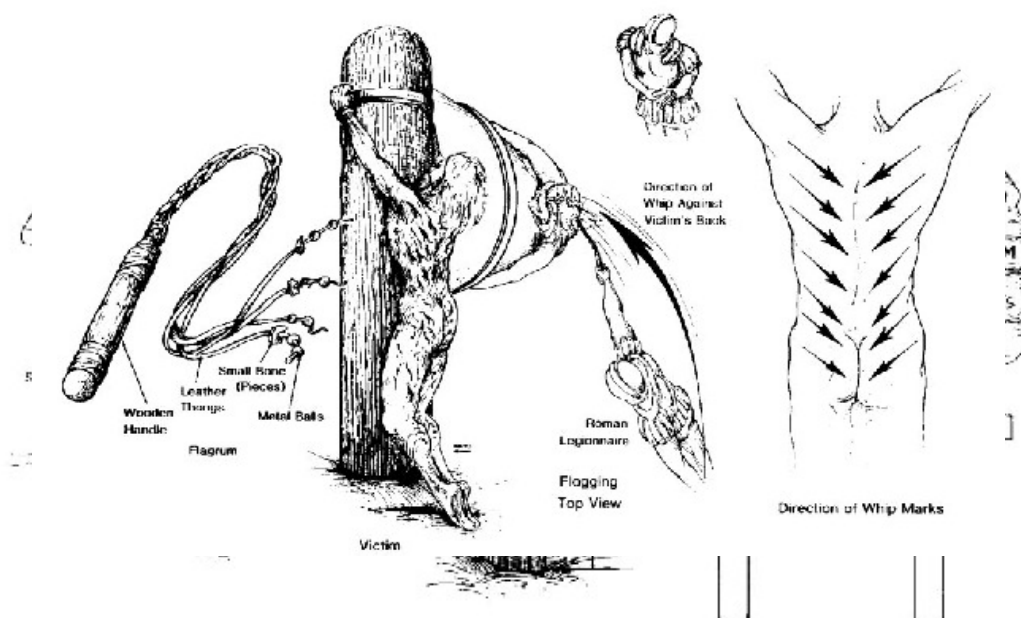
Flogging was a legal preliminary to every Roman execution, and only women and Roman senators or soldiers (except in cases of desertion) were exempt. The usual

instrument was a short whip (flagellum) with several single or braided leather thongs of variable lengths, in which small iron balls or sharp pieces of sheep bones were tied at intervals. Occasionally, staves also were used. For scourging, the man was stripped of his clothing, and his hands were tied to an upright post. The back, buttocks, and legs were flogged either by two soldiers (lictors) or by one who alternated positions. The severity of the scourging depended on the disposition of the lictors and was intended to weaken the victim to a state just short of collapse or death. After the scourging, the soldiers often taunted their victim.

As the Roman soldiers repeatedly struck the victim's back with full force, the iron balls would cause deep contusions, and the leather thongs and sheep bones would cut into the skin and Subcutaneous tissues. Then, as the flogging continued, the lacerations would tear into the underlying skeletal and produce quivering ribbons of bleeding flesh. Pain and blood loss generally set the stage for circulatory shock. The extent of blood loss may well have determined how long the victim would survive on the cross.

At the Praetorium [the Haram], Jesus was severely whipped. (Although the severity of the scourging is not discussed in the four gospel accounts, it is implied in one of the epistles [1 Peter 2:24 – “**by His stripes you were healed**”]. A detailed word study of the ancient Greek text for this verse indicates that the scourging of Jesus was particularly harsh. It is not known whether the number of lashes was limited to 39, in accordance with Jewish law. The Roman soldiers, amused that this weakened man had claimed to be a king, began to mock him by placing a robe on his shoulders, a crown of thorns on his head, and a staff as a scepter in his right hand. Next, they spat on Jesus and struck him on the head with the staff. Moreover, when the soldiers tore the robe from Jesus' back, they probably reopened the scourging wounds.

The severe scourging, with its intense pain and appreciable blood loss, most probably left Jesus in a pre-shock state. Moreover, hematidrosis had rendered his skin particularly tender. The physical and mental abuse meted out by the Jews and the Romans, as well as the lack of food, water, and sleep, also contributed to his generally weakened state. Therefore, even before the actual crucifixion, Jesus' physical condition was at least serious and possibly critical (**The Physical Death of Jesus Christ, A Study by the Mayo Clinic** - <http://www.frugalsites.net/jesus/scourging.htm>).



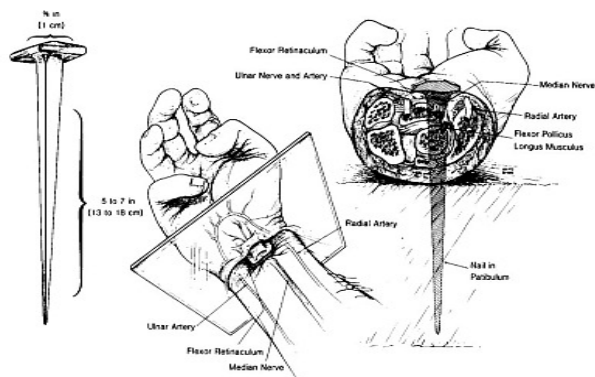
Crucifixion Practices

Crucifixion probably first began among the Persians. Alexander the Great introduced the practice to Egypt and Carthage, and the Romans appear to have learned of it from the Carthaginians. Although the Romans did not invent crucifixions they perfected it as a form of torture and capital punishment that was designed to produce a slow death with maximum pain and suffering. It was one of the most disgraceful and cruel methods of execution and usually was reserved only for slaves, foreigners, revolutionaries, and the vilest of criminals. Roman law usually protected Roman citizens from crucifixion, except perhaps in the case of desertion by soldiers.

In its earliest form in Persia, the victim was either tied to a tree or was tied to or impaled on an upright post, usually to keep the guilty victim's feet from touching holy ground. Only later was a true cross used; it was characterized by an upright post (stipes) and a horizontal crossbar (patibulum), and it had several variations.

Although archaeological and historical evidence strongly indicates that the low Tau cross was preferred by the Romans in Palestine at the time of Christ crucifixion practices often varied in a given geographic region and in accordance with the imagination of the executioners, and the Latin cross and other forms also may have been used.

Nailing of wrists. Left, Size of iron nail. Center, Location of nail in wrist, between carpals and radius. Right, Cross section of wrist, at level of plane indicated at left, showing path of nail, with probable transection of nerve and impalement of flexor pollicis longus, but without injury to major arterial trunks and without fractures of bones.

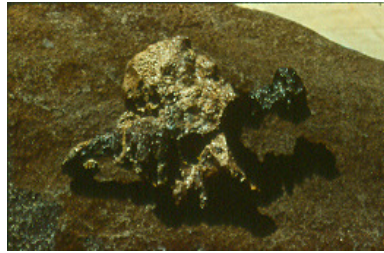


It was customary for the condemned man to carry his own cross from the flogging post to the site of crucifixion outside the city walls. He was usually naked, unless this was prohibited by local customs. Since the weight of the entire cross was probably well over 300 lb. (136 kg), only the crossbar was carried. The patibulum, weighing 75 to 125 lb. (34 to 57 kg), was placed across the nape of the victim's neck and balanced along both shoulders. Usually, the outstretched arms then were tied to the crossbar. The procession to the site of crucifixion was led by a complete Roman military guard, headed by a centurion. One of the soldiers carried a sign (titulus) on which the condemned man's name and crime were displayed. Later, the titulus would be attached to the top of the cross. The Roman guard would not leave the victim until they were sure of his death.

Outside the city walls was permanently located the heavy upright stipes, on which the patibulum would be secured. In the case of the Tau cross, this was accomplished by means of a mortise and tenon joint, with or without reinforcement by ropes. To prolong the crucifixion process, a horizontal block or plank, serving as a crude seat (sedile or sedulum), often was attached midway down the stipes. Only very rarely, and probably later than the time of Christ, was an additional block (suppedaneum) employed for transfixion of the feet.

At the site of execution, by law, the victim was given a bitter drink of wine mixed with myrrh (gall) as a mild analgesic. The criminal was then thrown to the ground on his back, with his arms outstretched along the patibulum. The hands could be nailed or tied to the crossbar, but nailing apparently was preferred by the Romans.

The archaeological remains of a crucified body, found in an ossuary near Jerusalem and dating from the time of Christ, indicate that the nails were tapered iron spikes approximately 5 to 7 in (13 to 18 cm) long with a square shaft 3/8 in (1 cm) across. Furthermore, ossuary findings and the Shroud of Turin have documented that the nails commonly were driven through the wrists rather than the palms.



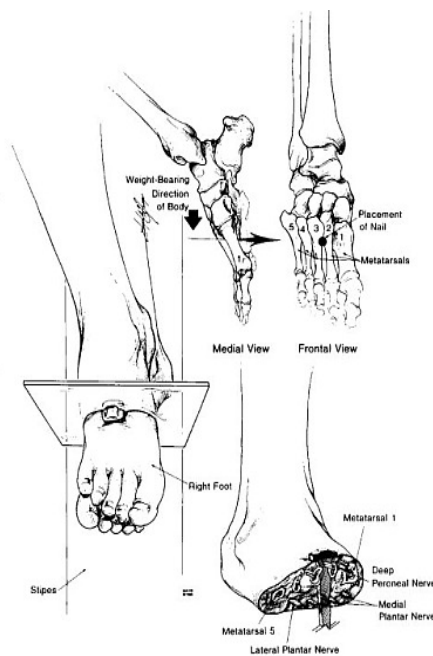
After both arms were fixed to the crossbar, the patibulum and the victim, together, were lifted onto the stipes. On the low cross, four soldiers could accomplish this relatively easily. However, on the tall cross, the soldiers used either forks or ladders.

Next, the feet were fixed to the cross, either by nails or ropes. Ossuary findings and the Shroud of Turin suggest that nailing was the preferred Roman practice. Although the feet could be fixed to the sides of the stipes or to a footrest (suppedaneum), they usually were nailed directly to the front of the stipes. To accomplish this, flexion of the knees may have been quite prominent, and the bent legs may have been rotated laterally.

Nailing of feet. Left, Position of feet atop one another and against stipes. Upper right, Location of nail in second inter metatarsal space. Lower right, Cross section of foot, at plane indicated at left, showing path of nail.

When the nailing was completed, the titulus was attached to the cross, by nails or cords, just above the victim's head. The soldiers and the civilian crowd often taunted and jeered the condemned man, and the soldiers customarily divided up his clothes among themselves.

The length of survival generally ranged from three or four hours to three or four days and appears to have been inversely related to the severity of the scourging. However, even if the scourging had been relatively mild, the Roman soldiers could hasten death by breaking the legs below the knees (erurifragium or skelokopia).



Not uncommonly, insects would light upon or burrow into the open wounds or the eyes, ears, and nose of the dying and helpless victim, and birds of prey would tear at these sites. Moreover, it was customary to leave the corpse on the cross to be devoured by predatory animals. However, by Roman law, the family of the condemned could take the body for burial, after obtaining permission from the Roman judge.

Since no one was intended to survive crucifixions the body was not released to the family until the soldiers were sure that the victim was dead. By custom, one of the Roman guards would pierce the body with a sword or lance. Traditionally, this had been considered a spear wound to the heart through the right side of the chest -- a fatal wound probably taught to most Roman soldiers. The Shroud of Turin documents this form of injury. Moreover, the standard infantry spear, which was 5 to 6 ft (1.5 to 1.8 m) long, could easily have reached the chest of a man crucified on the customary low cross."

Medical Aspects of Crucifixion

With a knowledge of both anatomy and ancient crucifixion practices, one may reconstruct the probable medical aspects of this form of slow execution. Each wound apparently was intended to produce intense agony, and the contributing causes of death were numerous.

The scourging prior to crucifixion served to weaken the condemned man and, if blood loss was considerable, to produce orthostatic hypotension and even hypovolemic shock. When the victim was thrown to the ground on his back, in preparation for transfixion of the hands, his scourging wounds most likely would become torn open again and contaminated with dirt. Furthermore, with each respiration, the painful scourging wounds would be scraped against the rough wood of the stipes. As a result, blood loss from the back probably would continue throughout the crucifixion ordeal.

With arms outstretched but not taut, the wrists were nailed to the patibulum. It has been shown that the ligaments and bones of the wrist can support the weight of a body hanging from them, but the palms cannot. Accordingly, the iron spikes probably were driven between the radius and the carpals or between the two rows of carpal bones, either proximal to or through the strong band like flexor retinaculum and the various intercarpal ligaments. Although a nail in either location in the wrist might pass between the bony elements and thereby produce no fractures, the likelihood of painful periosteal injury would seem great. Furthermore, the driven nail would crush or sever the rather large sensorimotor nerve. The stimulated nerve would produce excruciating bolts of fiery pain in both arms. Although the severed nerve would result in paralysis of a portion of the hand, ischemic contractures and impalement of various ligaments by the iron spike might produce a claw like grasp.

Most commonly, the feet were fixed to the front of the stipes by means of an iron spike driven through the first or second intermetatarsal space, just distal to the tarsometatarsal joint. It is likely that the deep peroneal nerve and branches of the medial and lateral plantar nerves would have been injured by the nails. Although scourging may have resulted in considerable blood loss, crucifixion per se was a relatively bloodless procedure, since no major arteries, other than perhaps the deep plantar arch, pass through the favored anatomic sites of transfixion.

The major pathophysiologic effect of crucifixion, beyond the excruciating pain, was a marked interference with normal respiration, particularly exhalation. The weight of the body, pulling down on the outstretched arms and shoulders, would tend to fix the intercostal in an inhalation state and thereby hinder passive exhalation. Accordingly, exhalation was primarily diaphragmatic, and breathing was shallow. It is likely that this form of respiration would not suffice and that hypercarbia would soon result. The onset of muscle cramps or tetanic contractions, due to fatigue and hypercarbia, would hinder respiration even further.

Adequate exhalation required lifting the body by pushing up on the feet and by flexing the elbows and adducting the shoulders. However, this maneuver would place the entire weight of the body on the tarsals and would produce searing pain. Furthermore, flexion of the elbows would cause rotation of the wrists about the iron nails and cause fiery pain along the damaged nerves. Lifting of the body would also

painfully scrape the scourged back against the rough stipes. Muscle cramps and paresthesias of the outstretched and uplifted arms would add to the discomfort. As a result, each respiratory effort would become agonizing and tiring and lead eventually to asphyxia.

The actual cause of death by crucifixion was multifactorial and varied somewhat with each case, but the two most prominent causes probably were hypovolemic shock and exhaustion asphyxia. Other possible contributing factors included dehydration, stress-induced arrhythmias, and congestive heart failure with the rapid accumulation of pericardial and perhaps pleural effusions. Crucifracture (breaking the legs below the knees), if performed, led to an asphyxic death within minutes.

Death by crucifixion was, in every sense of the word, excruciating (Latin, **excruciat**, or "out of the cross").

Crucifixion of Jesus

After the scourging and the mocking, at about 9 AM, the Roman soldiers put Jesus' clothes back on him and then led him and two thieves to be crucified. Jesus apparently was so weakened by the severe flogging that he could not carry the patibulum from the Praetorium to the site of crucifixion one third of a mile (600 to 650 m) away. Simon of Cyrene was summoned to carry Christ's cross, and the procession then made its way to Golgotha (or Calvary), an established crucifixion site.

Here, Jesus' clothes, except for a linen loincloth, again were removed, thereby probably reopening the scourging wounds. He then was offered a drink of wine mixed with myrrh (gall) but, after tasting it, refused the drink. Finally, Jesus and the two thieves were crucified. Although scriptural references are made to nails in the hands, these are not at odds with the archaeological evidence of wrist wounds, since the ancients customarily considered the wrist to be a part of the hand. The titulus was attached above Jesus' head. It is unclear whether Jesus was crucified on the Tau cross or the Latin cross; archaeological findings favor the former and early tradition the latter. The fact that Jesus later was offered a drink of wine vinegar from a sponge placed on the stalk of the hyssop plant (approximately 20 in, or 50 cm, long) strongly supports the belief that Jesus was crucified on the short cross.

The soldiers and the civilian crowd taunted Jesus throughout the crucifixion ordeal, and the soldiers cast lots for his clothing. Christ spoke seven times from the cross. Since speech occurs during exhalation, these short, terse utterances must have been particularly difficult and painful. At about 3 PM that [day], Jesus cried out in a loud voice, bowed his head, and died. The Roman soldiers and onlookers recognized his moment of death.

Since the Jews did not want the bodies to remain on the crosses after sunset, the beginning of the Sabbath, they asked Pontius Pilate to order crucifracture to hasten the deaths of the three crucified men. The soldiers broke the legs of the two thieves, but when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. Rather, one of the soldiers [had already] pierced his side, probably with an infantry spear, and produced a sudden flow of blood and water. Later that day, Jesus' body was taken down from the cross and placed in a tomb (www.frugalsites.net/jesus/crucifixion.htm).

In Isaiah's famous prophecy of Christ's suffering and crucifixion over 700 years before it occurred we read the following:

Behold, My Servant shall deal prudently; He shall be exalted and extolled and be very high. Just as many were astonished at you, **So His visage was marred more**

than any man, and His form more than the sons of men [He was brutally scourged more than any man!]; so shall He sprinkle many nations. Kings shall shut their mouths at Him; for what had not been told them they shall see, and what they had not heard they shall consider.

Who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed? For He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant, and as a root out of dry ground. He has no form or comeliness; and when we see Him, *there is* no beauty that we should desire Him. He is despised and rejected by men, a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, *our* faces from Him; He was despised, and we did not esteem Him.

Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows [emotional healing]; yet we esteemed Him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. **But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities [spiritual healing];** the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and **by His stripes we are healed [physical healing].** All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, every one, to his own way; and the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth; He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so He opened not His mouth.

He was taken from prison and from judgment, and who will declare His generation? For He was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgressions of My people He was stricken. And they made His grave with the wicked—but with the rich at His death, because He had done no violence, nor *was any* deceit in His mouth. Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise Him; He has put *Him* to grief. When You make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see *His* seed, He shall prolong *His* days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in His hand. He shall see the labor of His soul, *and* be satisfied. By His knowledge My righteous Servant shall justify many, for He shall bear their iniquities. Therefore I will divide Him a portion with the great, and He shall divide the spoil with the strong, because He poured out His soul unto death, and He was numbered with the transgressors, and He bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors (**Isaiah 52:13-53:12**).

In the church when we talk about healing we usually talk about two types of healing. We talk about spiritual healing –forgiveness from our sins and our new life in Christ and we also talk about physical healing - the healing of our physical bodies from sickness and disease.

We teach that Christ has paid the penalty for both our sins and the transgressions of health laws which lead to sickness. Since Christ has already paid the penalty we no longer have to bear the penalty of death for our sins and sickness for health transgressions which allows us to be healed by the miracle of God.

Has the church missed a third area of healing - that of emotional healing. Are there emotional afflictions which require healing and can we petition God to heal those in a similar way to which we request healing for our physical sicknesses?

We are all familiar with the phrases in those verses that talk about our spiritual healing like being “wounded for our transgressions” and “he was bruised for our iniquities”. We are also familiar with the phrase that refers to our physical healing - “by his stripes we are healed.”

Right before each of those phrases God also says that Christ has borne OUR griefs and OUR sorrows (**Isaiah 53:4**). Are griefs and sorrows sins? Are they physical afflictions such as sickness or disease? No, they are **EMOTIONS!** Christ has borne our griefs and sorrows. It seems to say here that He has paid those emotional afflictions for us through His death.

Griefs and sorrows are merely by-products of emotional afflictions which bind many people such as various emotional abuses, addictions and neuroses, even in the church. Is there a practical application of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ being used in healing some of these emotional afflictions in a similar way to that of physical healing?

One scripture that hints at this possibility is that of **James 5:16** which says, "Confess your trespasses to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed." When seen in the light of some of the quotes I'd like to provide from an author who has written extensively on the subject of the healing of emotions and memories, this passage in James may be a reference to both physical and emotional healing.

Another passage of scripture where this type of emotional healing technique appears to take place is when Christ re-created the setting when Peter denied Him three times and asked Peter three times if he loved Him.

There is an old saying that time heals all wounds. This phrase is true up to a point. The pain of most painful emotional experiences eases or heals with time but there are others that don't heal in the usual way. Like a physical wound, they become infected and the pain of those incidents, sometimes 20 years or more in the past, is just as clear and intense as the day that they occurred. This is where God's intervention is often needed.

The healing of emotions and memories is all about squaring the ledger - balancing the ledger in our mind through forgiving others, genuinely receiving and accepting forgiveness from God and, as a result of that, forgiving oneself.

By forgiving others we write off the debt they owe us in our minds for sins and hurts to us that may have been horrific and excruciating. We no longer stew over wanting our pound of flesh.

The healing of emotions / memories is where the miraculous intervention of God's spirit is sought to help a person to forgive others and forgive themselves when such forgiveness either way is almost impossible for them to do by themselves because of the extreme pain associated with those incidents and memories.

If death alone is the penalty for sin (**Romans 6:23**) why did Jesus have to go through the most brutal death ever as opposed to a quick death? The reason is because death is the ultimate penalty but not all there is to the penalty of sin. Sin also produces every kind of pain and suffering along the way to that ultimate penalty. His stripes were not merely to pay for our physical healings of breaking physical laws of health but also to pay the spiritual penalty of sin – "He was wounded for our transgressions, *He was bruised for our iniquities*" (**Isaiah 53:5**).

He was led away to be crucified by the priests from just outside the Praetorium, most likely from the southern steps at the south of the Haram, through the Miphkad gate just south of the SE corner of the Haram across the Bridge of the Red Heifer to the area close to the Miphkad Altar close to the southern summit of the Mount of Olives. He was led away by the priests just as the Red Heifer was to be killed on the Mount of Olives. On his way to Golgotha Jesus said to the women on the road:

'Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for Me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. For indeed the days are coming in which they will say, 'Blessed *are* the barren, wombs that never bore, and breasts which never nursed!' Then they will begin to say to the mountains, 'Fall on us!' and to the hills, 'Cover us!' (**Luke 23:28-30**).

Christ knew the terrible things that were ahead for the people of Jerusalem. God's judgment for their sins, through the cruel Romans, would come upon them in 40 years time when the great Diaspora would begin and last for nearly 1900 years.

Ernest Martin in the following comments shows the connection between the tree of life, the menorah and the crucifixion of Jesus:

First, look at the crucifixion scene itself. Realizing that it occurred near the southern summit of Olivet but facing the Temple and Jerusalem, we are provided with quite a dramatic spectacle. Imagine people walking down the road-way called "The Descent Of the Mount of Olives" (**Luke 19:37**) with their Passover lambs in their arms going into the Temple to have them killed (the worshippers would afterwards take the animals to their homes for roasting). On the way to the Temple these people would have seen the building housing the Miphkad Altar (called the Beth ha-Deshen) on their right. At the summit itself (but on their left) they would have seen three men crucified to a tree. It would have been an extraordinary scene for the Passover season. This would have been especially so if Jesus were looking westward towards his Father's House.

This would mean that one robber was nailed to the same tree with his back to Jesus and facing northeastwards, while the other would be in a similar position but facing southeastwards. There would have been six arms extended upwards suspended from each of their patibulums (crosspieces) while in the center of this scene would have been the trunk of the tree with its upper part exposed above them all...

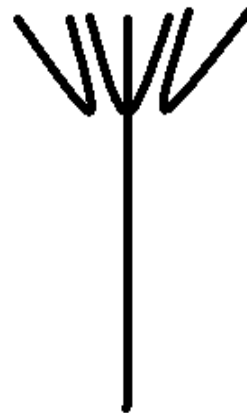
Let us look at the symbolism of the seven branched lampstand first of all, it represented the Tree of Life which was once located in the Garden of Eden. In a fascinating book titled "The Tree of Light," written by Leon Yarden of Jerusalem, he gives us a penetrating study into the meaning of the Menorah. He concluded his investigation with the recognition that the Menorah figuratively depicted an almond tree, and not just any almond tree, but the one that represented the Tree of Life...

Mention has been made in chapter twenty-one of this book that Jesus was crucified on a tree with two robbers also affixed to the same tree. This would have meant that there were six arms extending upwards around the tree itself.

This scene could provide a symbolic spectacle of a living Menorah (the seven branched lampstand). The Menorah did in fact represent the Tree of Life and the Light of the World. And notice the irony of the crucifixion scene. Here was Jesus east of the Holy of Holies and looking westwards towards the curtain of his Father's House.

Beyond that curtain were supposed to be a mercy seat (denoting the Throne of God) with the wings of two cherubim outstretched over that throne. Both cherubim were made to face one another and to face the One who symbolically sat on the mercy

Six arms plus trunk of tree -
a living Menorah



seat. These were found in the original Temple within the inner curtain of the Holy Place.

Now look at the scene of the crucifixion "outside the camp." It was a significant reversal to what was originally designed by God to be within the Holy of Holies. According to Christian teaching, here was the real Lord having been excommunicated from Israel and being crucified on a tree having two robbers as his "cherubim" with their arms stretched upwards and their faces turned away from him in the opposite direction. And if the tree of crucifixion were an almond, we have Jesus and the two robbers being sacrificed on the tree that Philo called "the tree of the priesthood." It represented the Tree of Life.

Their six arms extending upwards around a central part of a tree (the tree itself as the seventh "arm") could be reckoned a symbol of living Menorah. Jesus was pictured after his resurrection as standing in the midst of the seven branched lampstand (**Revelation 1:13**) a glorious and living existence with the unlimited power of the universe at his beck and call.

Was his crucifixion intended to show an opposite signification on a "Menorah" of degradation and shame? Whereas he should have been sitting on the mercy seat in the Holy of Holies, He was in a diametrically contrary situation as a sin offering banned from being a member of his own nation and being crucified near the outside altar of the Sanctuary. The scene, from the Christian point of view, would have been totally opposite from what should have been...

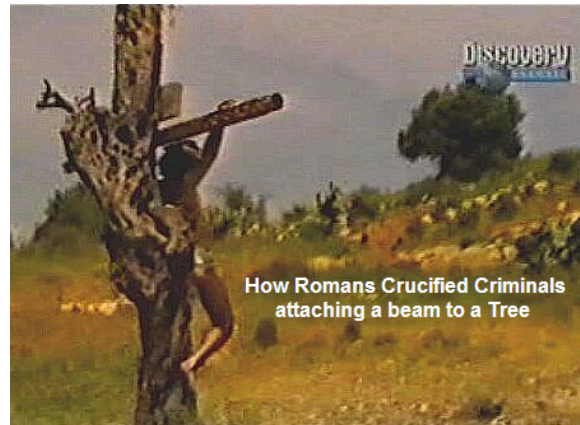
And further, the people who were carrying their Passover lambs to be killed in the Temple at the time of Jesus' crucifixion were turning their backs on the individual to whom they were intending to present those Passover lambs. This is because the roadway that led to the eastern gate of the Temple was descending from the top of the Mount of Olives. The people would have passed directly by Jesus hanging on a tree of crucifixion. And while worshippers were entering the Temple to pay tribute to the One sitting within the Holy of Holies (originally enthroned between two cherubim), the crowds were actually turning their backs on the real Jesus from heaven and his two "cherubim" (the robbers nailed to the same tree with their backs to him as well).

And when Jesus finally died on the tree (while all had their backs to him), he cried out: "My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?" This Psalm was composed by David on the same Mount of Olives when he had been excommunicated from his throne and people at the time of Absalom's rebellion (read all of **2 Samuel 15:19 through 18:33**). This means that God the Father himself (momentarily) also turned his face away from him. Jesus truly died rejected of men (**Isaiah 53:3**) - rejected and excommunicated by all including the Father himself. This is because in symbol he was carrying all the sins of the world on his back when he found himself in that final sacrificial position (**Golgotha p.382-384, 391-394**).

Ernest Martin in his book "**Secrets of Golgotha**" (p.306-322) puts forth a theory that Jesus was officially stoned on the cross at the same time that He was crucified. His main support comes from two scriptures. The first is **Leviticus 24:16** which pronounces death by stoning for those who blaspheme. The second is **Galatians 6:17** where Paul says that he bears in his body "the marks (scars) of the Lord Jesus." Paul had been stoned (**Acts 14:19-20**) and some attribute the apparent eye condition and poor physical appearance (**Galatians 4:13-15**) he appears to have had to the rocks that hit him when he was stoned.

Was Jesus officially stoned as well? My opinion is that He probably was not. First of all, such a detail is completely missing in the gospel accounts. Secondly, He would not have lasted six hours if there was an official stoning with a whole crowd casting rocks at Him simultaneously. I have no doubts, though, that unofficially a good number of people did

throw rocks at Him but that is not what caused His death. His blood had to be shed and that was by the sword of the spear as would happen for all Passover lambs.



There are seven sayings of Christ on the cross that are recorded for us in the gospels. It's interesting to note that all seven of these have a different theme. They reveal Jesus' innermost feelings as He poured out His life for us and provide a powerful example of how we, too, should react in times of great physical and emotional pain.

1] [THEME – FORGIVENESS] "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing" (Luke 23:34).

Jesus, shortly after He was nailed to the cross prayed: "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing". Instead of being consumed with his own pain and misery, Jesus asked forgiveness for those responsible for the evil done to Him and by extension, all who ignorantly go the way of sin.

Now what did Christ mean when He said "for they do not know what they do"? These hardened Roman soldiers didn't crucify Christ accidentally so what did He mean that they didn't know what they were doing?

We have a clue over in **Hebrews 12:2** where it says:

Jesus, the author and finisher of *our* faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross.

It says His mind was totally fixed on the joy that was set before Him. It was the burning vision of victory for mankind He was about to complete and His coming Kingdom that kept Him going at this time.

It is also this vision that helps us to understand what Christ meant when He said that they did not know what they were doing? He may well have projected His mind forward in time to when these soldiers will be resurrected and the full magnitude of what they had done to their Saviour will hit them. At that time they will probably deeply regret being involved in Christ's murder.

When we are deeply hurt by others it helps that we also have this kind of vision and project our mind forward to when those who hurt us will come to their senses and repent of their actions. It also helps to remember that everyone is a potential son or daughter of God.

2] [THEME – HOPE] "I tell you the truth today you will be with me in paradise" (Luke 23:43).

Both of the thieves who were crucified with Christ, had early on joined bystanders in mocking Jesus (**Mark 15:32**). Luke tells us in **Luke 24:39**:

One of the criminals who hung there hurled insults at him: 'Aren't you the Christ? Save yourself and us!'

This man wanted only escape from his pain. This criminal had no desire to know his Saviour and repent of his sins but a miraculous change occurred in the other criminal. He came to believe. He, too, had mocked Jesus earlier, but now he rebuked the other criminal. The two robbers represent the two groups of all humanity. We all start as sinners. One group repents and the other group of humanity will not (presumably far, far smaller).

We are not told of any other conversation between this second criminal and Jesus. Perhaps only Jesus' example and prayer, which he overheard, moved him deeply. He said: "Lord, remember me when you come into your kingdom" (**Luke 23:42**). Jesus replied by offering him hope for the future: "I tell you the truth today you will be with me in paradise" (**Luke 23:43**).

By paradise did Christ mean that this criminal would go straight to heaven? Now, we know that wasn't the case. What Jesus did know was that in the moment after this criminal's legs were broken and he died that he would come up in presumably the second resurrection which would seem like the same day to him. At that time the earth would have been transformed into a paradise and he will have his chance to receive salvation.

Again we see the incredible vision that He had on the cross. He just kept focusing ahead on the "joy that was set before Him" as it says in **Hebrews 12:2**. This kind of vision, this kind of thinking way ahead to the end result can help us to keep things in perspective and to encourage others when we, too, are suffering and it can help us to temper our responses in a godly way.

3] [THEME – CARE] "He said to His mother, 'Woman, behold your son!' Then He said to the disciple, 'Behold your mother!'" (John 19:26-27).

We read in **John 19:26-27**: "When Jesus saw his mother there, and the disciple whom He loved standing nearby, He said to His mother, 'Woman, behold your son!' Then He said to the disciple, 'Behold your mother! From that time on, this disciple took her into his home'".

Now Jesus' mother Mary had four other sons - James, Joseph, Simon and Judas. One might naturally think that one of them would probably be physically caring for Mary. **John 7:5** says that during His ministry Jesus' brothers did not believe in Him. Paul notes in **1 Corinthians 15:7** that He appeared to His brother James after His resurrection and this is probably when he and his brothers began to believe as they are with Mary and the apostles in **Acts 1:14** when a replacement is chosen for Judas. James became the leader of the Jerusalem church while Judas or Jude later wrote the epistle of Jude.

What need of Mary's did Jesus perceive on the cross that wasn't being met here by His brothers? That John took Mary into his home implies a physical need. Whether it was a physical or perhaps a spiritual need that wasn't being met Jesus saw to it that His disciple John would take care of His mother.

Again, instead of being consumed with his own pain and misery, Jesus cared for those around Him.

4] [THEME – LONELINESS] "'Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?' - which means, 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?'" (Matthew 27:46; Mark 15:34).

Jesus here then cried out, "'Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?' - which means, 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?'" (**Matthew 27:46; Mark 15:34**).

The Apostle Paul perhaps referred to this moment when he wrote in **2 Corinthians 5:21**:

For He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

At this moment the Father placed on Him the sins of humanity to be paid as He was about to die. **Isaiah 59:2** states that our sins separate us from God.

During his entire adult life, Jesus had an intimate and vibrant relationship with God as His Father. Suddenly, while suffering the agony and fatigue of crucifixion, Jesus could no longer feel that wonderful heavenly Presence. At this moment He could empathize with all of us when we feel separated from God because of our sins and guilt.

Sin is utterly repugnant to God. At this moment in time all of our sins were, in essence, borne by Him and He became sin for us. It would appear as if God temporarily turned His back on Him symbolizing how utterly repugnant sin is to Him when He became sin for us.

What emotions poured through the Father's heart as He saw His beloved Son in indescribable agony on the cross? Imagine the sorrow that the Father felt when He felt compelled to turn His back on Him as He became sin for us. We can feel Christ's painful sorrow when He cried out "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" Imagine the sorrow in the Father's heart as He watched His Son die that dark afternoon.

5] [THEME - SUFFERING] "I am thirsty" (John 19:28).

The time of final sacrifice was close. Jesus had endured and overcome the heat, pain, rejection and loneliness. He could have suffered and died in silence. Instead, unexpectedly, he asked for help. "Knowing that all was now completed, and so that the Scripture would be fulfilled, Jesus said, 'I am thirsty'" (**John 19:28**).

Earlier He'd been offered the same drink but with added gall. He refused it as recorded in **Matthew 27:34**. Why refuse it earlier and now take a drink at the moment of death? "With the Word Bible Commentary" makes this comment about the vinegar mixed with gall:

The narcotic drink would have helped deaden the pain, but Jesus refused it. He drank the cup of suffering instead.

Instead of reaching for a comforter He was prepared to take the difficult but necessary path. When finally He had fully drank of the cup of suffering He then asked for a drink.

6] [THEME - TRIUMPH]“It is finished” (John 19:30).

The sixth saying of Christ on the cross is one of triumph. **John 19:30** says: "When he had received the drink, Jesus said, 'It is finished.' With that, He bowed His head and gave up his spirit".

Jesus' humility rings in his words. His was not a vain, I-showed-you attitude. He did not even say, "I did it" or "I did it My way" as Frank Sinatra used to sing. He claimed no credit. To the end, Jesus' mind was on the work He came to do. He triumphantly announced, for all to hear, "It is finished."

Imagine the incredible relief He must have felt at this moment at having run the course and done the incredibly difficult and even risky job He had to do to make possible the forgiveness of all mankind and open up salvation to all.

7] [THEME – REUNION] “Father, into your hands I commit my spirit” (Luke 23:46).

“Jesus called out with a loud voice, 'Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.' When he had said this, He breathed his last". He looked forward to finally being fully reunited with His Father. At that dramatic moment Jesus died for you and me and became the true Passover sacrifice for each and every one of us.

The way that John records his gospel, at first, gives the impression that Jesus died first before the soldier thrust his spear into Jesus' side which is how it is portrayed in “The Passion of the Christ”. In “The Passion of the Christ” the soldiers suspect He is already dead and one of them thrusts him in the side to test that He is dead.



The original text of Matthew's gospel helps clear up the confusion of whether He died before or after the spear was thrust into Him. In **Matthew 27:49**, after He took the drink of vinegar, we read, “But the rest said, ‘Let Him alone! Let us see if Elijah comes to save Him.’” Most Bible versions then go straight to **verse 50** which says that He cried out again and gave up His spirit.

Fred Coulter in his “A Harmony of the Gospels” writes:

The latter half of this verse, which begins with the words ‘Then another took a spear...’ has been omitted from the King James Version. However, a majority of ancient manuscripts contain this part of the verse; these manuscripts include the codex Vaticanus and Sinaiticus...Older translations which contain the complete verse are the Moffatt translation and the Fenton translation (p. 304).

From the latter half of **verse 49** it should read:

Then another took a spear and thrust it into His side and out came water and blood.
And after crying out again with a loud voice, Jesus yielded up His spirit.

The above picture of a Roman spear is the holy lance that is part of the crown jewels of the Holy Roman Empire in Vienna which is reputedly the very spear that was used to kill Christ. Hitler was fascinated by it and just stared at it for an hour when he annexed Austria.

The Father must have had mixed feelings at the moment that Jesus died. He would have felt great pride and joy in His Son for doing the difficult job He had to do. At the same time there would have been great sorrow that temporarily He had lost His beloved Son and best friend to a cruel death. Other than the unconscious spirit record of Him, His Son had been wiped out of existence.

Just as the Father had sent angels to announce the birth of His Son, He also provided miraculous events to announce the death of His Son. There was an incredible darkness that came over the land in the mid afternoon, the veil of the Temple was torn in two to picture the kind of direct access that mankind had to God now that Christ had paid for mankind's sins and many people who had recently died were resurrected to a short physical life.

Then, behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom; and the earth quaked, and the rocks were split, and the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised; and coming out of the graves after His resurrection, they went into the holy city and appeared to many. So when the centurion and those with him, who were guarding Jesus, saw the earthquake and the things that had happened, they feared greatly, saying, 'Truly this was the Son of God!' (**Matthew 27:51-54**).

It appears as if God had given His Holy Spirit to a number of people who had of a normal lifespan died shortly before Christ's death for just this purpose as a witness of the Messiahship of Jesus Christ. We know that John the Baptist's mother, Elizabeth, had the Holy Spirit (**Luke 1:41**) and presumably his father as well (**Luke 1:6**). Simeon, who died shortly after being able to hold the baby Jesus, also had the Holy Spirit (**Luke 2:25**). One wonders if the centurion present at the death of Christ who reverently acknowledged Him as the Son of God after seeing the miracles that accompanied His death was the same centurion who's servant Jesus healed.

Ernest Martin has these thoughts on what he believes the Jews were intending to do with the dead body of Jesus after He was crucified:

But this doesn't end the story as far as Jesus' punishment was concerned. To complete the humiliation for such an accursed one, there was one other Old Testament example that had to be accomplished to fulfill the totality of the Old Testament legislation on the punishment of despicable criminals. We find that the tree on which the ultra-criminal was hanged had to be consumed by fire as was Achan and all his goods in the time of Joshua. Note what the scriptural example shows for individuals who had been censured as being an accursed one as was Jesus.

"And it shall be, that he that is taken with the accursed thing SHALL BE BURNT WITH FIRE, he and all that he has: because he has transgressed the covenant of the Lord [Yahweh], and because he has wrought folly in Israel" (**Joshua 7:15**).

And this is exactly what the authorities in Jerusalem were intending to do with Jesus. But, as explained in the last chapter, Joseph of Arimathea stepped in hurriedly to prevent this fate from happening to the body of Jesus. Though it is probable that the tree on which Jesus was killed (being considered accursed) was uprooted and burnt to ashes to keep the land from being contaminated, Jesus himself was spared this

judicial requirement because Pilate granted Joseph of Arimathea his request to bury Jesus in his newly hewn tomb not far away from the crucifixion site (**Golgotha p.320**).

Jesus was buried by Joseph of Arimathea, traditionally believed to have been his uncle and a Roman citizen. Jesus was buried in a nearby tomb. As we saw earlier there is good evidence to believe that this tomb, which became a significant christian site in the first three centuries, was located in the grotto/cave/tomb area under the Pater Noster church on the northern part of the Mount of Olives.



We know that Christ's flesh was torn and broken but why did God make sure that none of His bones would be broken (**John 19:33-36**), as is pictured by the Passover lamb being roasted whole with no bones broken (**Exodus 12:43-46**)?

Our bones make up our inner framework and picture our inner strength. I suspect the importance of God ensuring His bones weren't broken is a type of Christ's inner strength of character, through God's spirit, not being broken through the ordeal that He went through. He did not compromise an inch with sin through all that He went through (**1 Peter 2:21-23**). By doing so He left a very powerful example for us to follow in not compromising with God's way of life as we go through trials.

Jesus' Resurrection

Ralph Woodrow writes the following about when Christ was resurrected:

Since there are twelve hours in a day and twelve hours in a night (**John 11:9-10**), if we figure a full 'three days and three nights', this would equal 72 hours. But was the time element exactly 72 hours? Jesus was to be in the tomb for 'three days and three nights' and rise 'after three days' (**Mark 8:31**). We see no reason to figure this as any less than a full 72 hours. On the other hand, if he was to be raised from the dead 'in three days' (**John 2:19**), this could not be any more than 72 hours. To harmonize these various statements, it does not seem unreasonable to assume that the time period was exactly 72 hours. After all, God is a God of EXACTNESS. He does everything right on schedule. Nothing is accidental with him...

If the resurrection took place at the same time of day as when Jesus was buried - only three days later - this would place the resurrection close to sundown, not sunrise, as is commonly assumed. A sunrise resurrection would have required an extra night - three days and four nights. This was not the case, of course. Those who came to the tomb at sunrise, instead of witnessing the resurrection at that precise time, found that the tomb was already empty (**Mark 16:2**). John's account tells us that Mary Magdalene came to the tomb when it was yet DARK on the first day of the week and Jesus was NOT there (**John 20:1-2**). The gospel writers tell of several different visits made by the disciples to the tomb on that first day of the week. In EVERY instance, they found the tomb EMPTY!" (Babylon Mystery Religion, p.136-137).

If we work back three days and three nights from just before sunset on Saturday when He was resurrected we have to conclude that He was crucified on Wednesday afternoon and buried just before sunset on Wednesday.

In **John 19:30-31** we read:

So when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, 'It is finished!' And bowing His head, He gave up His spirit. Therefore, because it was the Preparation Day, that the bodies should not remain on the cross on the Sabbath (**for that Sabbath was a high day**), the Jews asked Pilate that their legs might be broken, and *that* they might be taken away.

The Sabbath the day after Christ was crucified was a high day – it was an annual Sabbath – the first Day of Unleavened Bread (The 15th of Nisan, the first month). The night before Christ was crucified He kept the Passover (**Luke 22:8-20**). This was the night part of the 14th of Nisan, the first month. Later during the day part of the same day that they ate the Passover meal He was crucified, becoming the Passover lamb slain for us so that God might pass over our sins (**1 Corinthians 5:7**).

In the year that Christ was crucified, **30 A.D.**, the Passover, when He was crucified, fell on a Wednesday and the first Day of Unleavened Bread (the high Sabbath) fell on a Thursday. The women bought and prepared spices for His burial on the Friday after the annual Sabbath (**Mark 16:1**) and then rested on the weekly Sabbath (**Luke 23:56**) before going to the tomb on the first day of the week to find that He had already risen.

If Christ was resurrected just before sunset on the sabbath and didn't show Himself to anyone or ascend to His Father until just before dawn near 12 hours later what was He doing with Himself during that time? We find a possible hint in **1 Peter 3:18-20** where Peter writes:

For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit, by whom also He went and preached to the spirits in prison, who formerly were disobedient, when once the Divine longsuffering waited in the days of Noah,

It appears quite possible that during those few hours that He went to preach to the imprisoned fallen angels (**Jude 6**) who rebelled at the time of Noah according to what Peter wrote.

The sorrow of Christ's death was turned to great joy when the Father resurrected His Son from the dead.

Now on the first *day* of the week Mary Magdalene went to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw *that* the stone had been taken away from the tomb. Then she ran and came to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and said to them, 'They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid Him.' Peter therefore went out, and the other disciple, and were going to the tomb. So they both ran together, and the other disciple outran Peter and came to the tomb first. And he, stooping down and looking in, saw the linen cloths lying *there*; yet he did not go in. Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb; and he saw the linen cloths lying *there*, and the handkerchief that had been around His head, not lying with the linen cloths, but folded together in a place by itself. Then the other disciple, who came to the tomb first, went in also; and he saw and believed. For as yet they did not know the Scripture, that He must rise again from the dead. Then the disciples went away again to their own homes (**John 20:1-10**).

Christ had told the disciples on more than one occasion that He would be crucified AND rise again and yet it didn't sink in or, at least, God didn't let it sink in.

But Mary stood outside by the tomb weeping, and as she wept she stooped down *and looked* into the tomb. And she saw two angels in white sitting, one at the head and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. Then they said to her, 'Woman, why are you weeping?' She said to them, 'Because they have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid Him.' Now when she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing *there*, and did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to her, 'Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?' She, supposing Him to be the gardener, said to Him, 'Sir, if You have carried Him away, tell me where You have laid Him, and I will take Him away.'



Jesus said to her, 'Mary!' She turned and said to Him, 'Rabboni!' (which is to say, Teacher). Jesus said to her, 'Do not cling to Me, for I have not yet ascended to My Father; but go to My brethren and say to them, 'I am ascending to My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God.' Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and *that* He had spoken these things to her (**John 20:11-18**).

Mary Magdalene, who was not only a woman but possibly had been a prostitute prior to becoming a disciple, was given by God the privilege to be the first person to see Christ after His resurrection. Christ would then ascend to heaven to be accepted by God the Father as the true wavesheaf offering (**Leviticus 23:10-11**). He went to heaven and back in the same day which shows how infinitely fast a spirit being can travel – way faster than warp factor ten on Star Trek.

When Christ ascended to Heaven to be accepted by His Father you can be sure that it was not an unemotional affair. They would have embraced each other and possibly wept spiritual tears of joy just as the father embraced his son who was lost but now was found. The dramatic scene of what it was like when Christ, the Lamb of God, came before His Father and was accepted is pictured in vision in **Revelation 4 and 5**.

The wavesheaf offering was performed on the day after the weekly sabbath that fell during the Days of Unleavened Bread. It was usually cut right after sunset so there would be the maximum time to have it prepared and waved at the Temple at the time of the morning sacrifice around 9am on Sunday morning. The wavesheaf offering came from the very first sheaf of the firstfruits harvest – in other words, the first of the firstfruits.

In **1 Corinthians 15:22-23** Paul wrote the following about who symbolized the first of this firstfruits harvest when he said:

For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those *who are* Christ's at His coming.

Jesus Christ symbolized the very first of the firstfruits. He is the captain of our salvation – the pioneer for the rest of the church in this age – the firstborn from the dead (**Colossians 1:18**).

What was the symbolism of waving the offering to God? This was not the only offering waved to God. Waving also done with the peace offerings where God, the priests and the offerers all got to share in the eating of the animal sacrifice. It was also done with consecration of Aaronic priesthood and the law of jealousy where there was suspicion of adultery.

Traditionally, the ceremony of "waving" seems to have meant that parts of the sacrifice were swung or elevated towards the altar, signifying that they were given to God, and then swung back again, indicating that they were given back by God to the priests, for them to eat (see also **Leviticus 9:18-21; 10:14-15; Numbers 6:19-20; 18:18**).

How did Christ symbolize this waving ceremony? The acceptance by the Father of Christ as the Wave Sheaf consecrated Him as our High Priest, just as the wave offering that consecrated the Aaronic priesthood (**Exodus 29:19-21**). And, just as the waving of the breast and the right thigh pictured the offering accepted by God but then given back by Him to the priests and their families, so has Christ, our High Priest in heaven who intercedes for us (**Romans 8:34; Hebrews 7:25**), been given back in service to the saints, those who are becoming priests of God.

Just as the new grain could not be eaten until the wave sheaf was offered, neither could those called by God and reconciled to Him fully partake of salvation through receiving the Holy Spirit until He had ascended to be accepted by God for all them and all humanity. Through His ascension He was waved to God. He was waved back to us for our benefit when He later descended that same day. His ascension may well have taken place at the same time of day the wavesheaf offering took place at the Temple.

Jesus became a pledge from God that what happened with Christ – His resurrection and ascension – will happen for us as well. We, too, will one day be resurrected and ascend to meet him in the clouds at His glorious second coming.

What must have the scene in heaven been like when He was reunited with His Father? We get a glimpse of this in **Psalms 24** where we read:

Who may ascend into the hill of the LORD? Or who may stand in His holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart... Who *is* this King of glory? The LORD strong and mighty, the LORD mighty in battle. Lift up your heads, O you gates! Lift up, you everlasting doors! (**verses 3-4, 8-9**).

Revelation 4 and 5 paints a similar vision. John sees God the Father sitting on a majestic throne with a rainbow around it and a sea of glass before surrounded by the 24 elders on thrones and a great multitude of angels. There is no sign of Jesus Christ until He begins to walk across to them over the sea of glass and stood as a Lamb that looked as if it had been slain.

While this vision occurs later it does help paint a picture of what the scene may have been like. It was the first time that Jesus had seen the Father face to face since He became a mere pinprick in Mary's womb. It must have been an incredibly emotional and teary-eyed moment, to say the least, when they finally embraced each other again.

There is one parallel between the Temple sacrifices and Jesus' trial and crucifixion in one important ritual that took place on the Day of Atonement that was NOT fulfilled in a figurative sense by the High Priest or by other priests at the time of Jesus' ordeal. That was taking the blood of the sin offerings on the Day of Atonement into the Holy

of Holies (**Leviticus 16**). But, interestingly, even this type was fulfilled by Jesus. This important figurative teaching was not accomplished by a surrogate priest on behalf of Jesus or on behalf of the nation of Israel. It was done by Jesus himself.

The author of the Book of Hebrews says that this single most important ritual was reserved to be fulfilled by Jesus himself. Instead of going with his own blood into the Holy of Holies located in the Temple on earth, we are told that after his resurrection Jesus took a portion of his own blood and went into heaven and sprinkled the celestial Holy of Holies with his own purifying blood right at the place where God the Father was seated on his throne of glory and that the Father accepted it as valid (Hebrews 9:12,23,24). With this final act of Jesus, all the sacrificial rituals associated with the Tabernacle and Temple were fulfilled precisely by the ordained Son of God (**Golgotha p.399-400**).

After being reunited with His Father in heaven it was then time to be reunited with His disciples.

Now behold, two of them were traveling that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was seven miles from Jerusalem. And they talked together of all these things which had happened. So it was, while they conversed and reasoned, that Jesus Himself drew near and went with them. But their eyes were restrained, so that they did not know Him. And He said to them, 'What kind of conversation *is* this that you have with one another as you walk and are sad?'

Then the one whose name was Cleopas answered and said to Him, 'Are You the only stranger in Jerusalem, and have You not known the things which happened there in these days?' And He said to them, 'What things?' So they said to Him, 'The things concerning Jesus of Nazareth, who was a Prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered Him to be condemned to death, and crucified Him. But we were hoping that it was He who was going to redeem Israel. Indeed, besides all this, today is the third day since these things happened. Yes, and certain women of our company, who arrived at the tomb early, astonished us. When they did not find His body, they came saying that they had also seen a vision of angels who said He was alive. And certain of those *who were* with us went to the tomb and found *it* just as the women had said; but Him they did not see.'

Then He said to them, 'O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! 'Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?' And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself. Then they drew near to the village where they were going, and He indicated that He would have gone farther. But they constrained Him, saying, 'Abide with us, for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent.' And He went in to stay with them. 'Now it came to pass, as He sat at the table with them, that He took bread, blessed and broke *it*, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened and they knew Him; and He vanished from their sight. And they said to one another, 'Did not our heart burn within us while He talked with us on the road, and while He opened the Scriptures to us?' So they rose up that very hour and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven and those *who were* with them gathered together, saying, 'The Lord is risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!' (**Luke 24:13-27**).

Here we see Jesus' sense of humour again when He had a little fun and tom foolery by hiding His identity from His disciples and disappearing right at the moment He opened the veil from their eyes when they finally recognized Him.

Then, the same day at evening, being the first *day* of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said to them, 'Peace *be* with you.' When He had said this, He showed them *His* hands and His side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. So Jesus said to them again, 'Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you.' And when He had said this, He breathed on *them*, and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the *sins* of any, they are retained.'

Now Thomas, called the Twin, one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. The other disciples therefore said to him, 'We have seen the Lord.' So he said to them, 'Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe.' And after eight days His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, 'Peace to you!' Then He said to Thomas, 'Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand *here*, and put *it* into My side. Do not be unbelieving, but believing.' And Thomas answered and said to Him, 'My Lord and my God!' Jesus said to him, 'Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed *are* those who have not seen and *yet* have believed' **(John 20:19-29)**.

Imagine the joy at being re-united with His disciples; these dear close friends who He interacted with constantly for the past three and a half years. Jesus seemed to transform from His spirit body to the physical body He died in with its wounds and fist-size opening when He offered Thomas proof of His resurrection. Perhaps raising and using His physical body as proof for Thomas was what Jesus was referring to when He said "Destroy this temple, and in three days I [not the Father] will raise it up" **(John 2:19)**.

When Jesus appeared again to His disciples on the shores of Lake Galilee we read:

Then, as soon as they had come to land, they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid on it, and bread. Jesus said to them, 'Bring some of the fish which you have just caught.' Simon Peter went up and dragged the net to land, full of large fish, one hundred and fifty-three; and although there were so many, the net was not broken. Jesus said to them, 'Come *and* eat breakfast'" **(John 21:9-12)**. Jesus here was a good host and prepared breakfast for them.

So when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, 'Simon, *son* of Jonah, do you love Me more than these?' He said to Him, 'Yes, Lord; You know that I love You.' He said to him, 'Feed My lambs.' He said to him again a second time, 'Simon, *son* of Jonah, do you love Me?' He said to Him, 'Yes, Lord; You know that I love You.' He said to him, 'Tend My sheep.' He said to him the third time, 'Simon, *son* of Jonah, do you love Me?' Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, 'Do you love Me?' And he said to Him, 'Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You.' Jesus said to him, 'Feed My sheep.' **(John 21:15-17)**.

After the resurrection Jesus here re-created the physical surroundings of Peter's denial with a charcoal-fire breakfast and then asked Peter three times if he loved Him. Each time Peter replied, "Lord, you know that I love you." Now, the questions were not for Jesus' sake. They were Peter's. Just as Peter denied Him three times, Christ wanted three affirmations so Peter's resolve would be strengthened and he would be able to be the lead apostle and eventually die for Christ's sake.

What is interesting about this passage in **John 21** is that when Christ asked, "Do you love me?", the Greek word used for love is agape which means the total unconditional love of God. When Peter tells Christ "you know I love you" the Greek word that Peter uses is philio, meaning brotherly love.

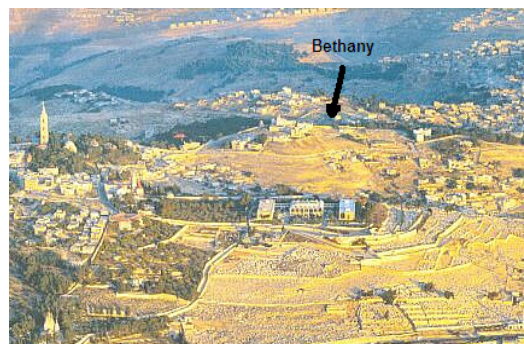
I've wondered why Peter answered with philio and not agape and the best answer I could come up with is that Peter felt truly humbled. He realized of his own strength that he could not promise the total unconditional love of God to Christ given that He had failed so miserably to do so when he denied Christ only days earlier. Instead he promised his best under the circumstances which was philio.

When he came to see himself as the weak human being that he was, the deep pain he felt from denying Christ was instrumental in providing the motivation to rid himself of the impetuosity that often got him into trouble. He eventually went on to become a great pillar in the early church of God and his epistles have many references to the benefits of trials in the Christian life in producing godly character.

One other interesting sidebar to this story is that in one of the three times He asked Peter to look after the spiritual flock of God He said "Feed my lambs". God is very interested and cares for the young people in His church who are the next generation of Christians.

After Christ returned from offering Himself as the true wavesheaf to His father He gave the great commission to His disciples to go into all nations and make disciples and baptize them (**Matthew 28:19-20**). In essence He said: "The firstfruits wave offering has taken place. Get out there all over the world now and reap that first, smaller harvest of souls." He wants us to put our hearts and souls into supporting God's first harvesting of souls right now!

We read that forty days after His crucifixion (**Acts 1:3**) he led them to Bethany (**Luke 24:50-51**) which is elsewhere equated as being on the Mount of Olives (**Acts 1:12**) where He then ascended to His Father in heaven. Bethany is located at the SE base of the southern part of the Mount of Olives and was the town where Lazarus came from who Jesus resurrected. From the Mount of Olives He ascended to heaven and to this important site He will one day return in a very dramatic way which we will look at in the next section on the future of Jerusalem!



PART THREE: THE FUTURE TEMPLES

The New Testament Temple - the Church of God

For the last 2 000 years there has been no Temple in Jerusalem. In this New Testament age the focus of God's attention has been on the Church of God that He has raised up and not on a particular place. This was foretold by Jesus in His discussion with the Samaritan woman:

The woman said to Him, "Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet. Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, and you *Jews* say that in Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship."

Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father. You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God *is* Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth" (**John 4:19-24**).

At the time of the dedication of the Temple that Solomon built he said:

Behold, heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain You. How much less this temple which I have built! Yet regard the prayer of Your servant and his supplication, O LORD my God, and listen to the cry and the prayer which Your servant is praying before You today: that Your eyes may be open toward this temple night and day, toward the place of which You said, 'My name shall be there,' that You may hear the prayer which Your servant makes **toward this place**. And may You hear the supplication of Your servant and of Your people Israel, when they pray toward this place. Hear in heaven Your dwelling place; and when You hear, forgive (**1 Kings 8:27-30**).

It became customary for the Israelites to pray towards the Temple. A good example of this was Daniel's custom of opening his windows and praying towards Jerusalem (**Daniel 6:10**) in a similar way that Muslims today face Mecca when they pray five times a day. Daniel maintained this custom even though the Babylonians had destroyed the Temple in Jerusalem at the time.

The Temple was destroyed a second time by the Romans in **70 AD** but God established a new Temple in the days before the Romans. The Church of God became that new Temple of God. The New Testament is full of verses that show the analogy that the Church of God is the Temple of God at this time now that He has given out His Holy Spirit on all who become a part of His church and lives in them. The apostle Paul in **Ephesians 2:19-22** wrote:

Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief *cornerstone*, in whom the whole building, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.

Before we look at the prophecies regarding the end-time Temple to be built by the Jews and the millennial Temple that will be built after Jesus Christ returns to earth let's look at what the Bible has to say about the New Testament Church being likened to a Temple and see what lessons we can learn from those passages.

In **1 Corinthians 3:16** we read the following:

Do you not know that you are the temple of God and *that* the Spirit of God dwells in you?

There are a few lessons that we can learn from this analogy that is used a few times in the Bible. I'd like to go through three simple lessons that we can learn from this analogy of the church of God being likened to the Temple of God.

The first lesson can be found in the next verse where we read:

If anyone defiles [or destroys as the margin reads] the temple of God, God will destroy him. For the temple of God is holy, which *temple* you are (**1 Corinthians 3:17**).

Our fellow brothers and sisters in the church are very precious to God. God is in and lives in our fellow brothers and sisters through His Holy Spirit. When we hurt or offend any of our fellow church members God takes it very personally because He dwells in them also through His Holy Spirit.

The first lesson here is that we have to take care of the way we treat all of our fellow members in the church - not just some or most of them but all of our brethren regardless of their station in life or their personality temperament. We should do all we can to help build one another up in His spiritual Temple so as many of our fellow brethren as possible can make it into His kingdom.

This point is also brought out in the parable of the sheep and the goats in **Matthew 25**. The focus in that parable is a little bit different in that it focuses not on sins of commission (things that we do) but on sins of omission (things that we don't do). That parable encourages us to not hurt our fellow members in the church through neglect.

In **Matthew 25:44-45** we read:

Then they also will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to You?' Then He will answer them, saying, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did not do *it* to one of the least of these, you did not do *it* to Me.'

The corollary of that is, if we are reaching out to those in the church who are hungry, physically and emotionally, who are lonely, who are new and visiting from other places and who are hurting and in need, even "the least of these My brethren" to use Christ's words, then we are doing it to God, who dwells in them through His Holy Spirit and God will bless us in return.

The second lesson we can learn from the analogy of the church of God being likened to the Temple of God is to not pollute our minds and our bodies since God dwells within us. We read about this in **1 Corinthians 6:18-20** where we read the following:

Flee sexual immorality. Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body. Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit *[which] is in you, [which] you have from God, and you are not your own?* For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.

Since God has made a home and dwells in us through His spirit we must not pollute our minds and bodies with the sinful values and practices of this world. Paul says that since our body is the temple of the Holy Spirit we must not pollute it or offend God with practices such as sexual immorality, which is every bit as much a problem today in this world as it was in Corinth in Paul's day.

The third lesson of the analogy is found in **1 Peter 2:5**. In that verse we read the following:

You also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

What is the purpose of a temple for God? It's a place that people go to worship and honour the great God who created the universe. We are to be actively engaged in offering up spiritual sacrifices to our great God through our prayers and intercession for others and doing good works that bring honour to God when they appreciate the way of life that we live that comes straight from God. Hopefully when we look back on each day or week or month or whenever we examine our behaviour we can point to a good number of spiritual sacrifices that we have done. As the temple of God we need to have a reverent attitude towards God.

In **Revelation 11:1-2** we read:

Then I was given a reed like a measuring rod. And the angel stood, saying, "Rise and measure the temple of God, the altar, and those who worship there. But leave out the court which is outside the temple, and do not measure it, for it has been given to the Gentiles. And they will tread the holy city underfoot *for* forty-two months."

We are told that the man of sin will enter the Temple of God (**2 Thessalonians 2:3-4**) so the beast power will have control of the end-time Temple that the Jews build as well as control of Jerusalem, the holy city.

This scripture indicates the Temple referred to in **Revelation 11:1-2** is not that physical Temple since the Temple referred to in **Revelation 11:1-2** will not be at the mercy of the Gentiles in the same way its outer court and Jerusalem will be. We would have to conclude that it is referring to the New Testament church as the Temple. If so, then we are encouraged to remain an integral part of the church and not outside as a prospective member or a spiritual Gentile so we will be protected in the tribulation.

There is a very interesting prophecy relating to the Temple of God that is found over in the first chapters of the book of Zechariah. Now Zechariah lived in the days when a remnant of

the Jews came back from Babylon to rebuild the temple. In chapters **Zechariah 3 and 4** Zechariah makes mention of a couple of individuals by the names of Joshua and Zerubbabel. **Haggai 2:2** tells us that Joshua was the high priest and Zerubbabel was the governor of Judah at the time.

Now, while the prophecy certainly related to Zechariah's time, it appears as if this prophecy might also be dual with an end-time context as well. In **Zechariah 4:11-14** we read:

Then I answered and said to him, 'What *are* these two olive trees—at the right of the lampstand and at its left?' And I further answered and said to him, 'What *are these* two olive branches that *drip* into the receptacles of the two gold pipes from which the golden *oil* drains?' Then he answered me and said, 'Do you not know what these *are*?' And I said, 'No, my lord.' So he said, 'These *are* the two anointed ones, who stand beside the Lord of the whole earth.'

This is very similar to **Revelation 11:4**. In that verse, speaking about the two witnesses that will prophesy in the Great Tribulation, we read:

These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands standing before the God of the earth.

I find that expression "the two lampstands" somewhat intriguing because the symbol of a lampstand is used to refer to a church in **Revelation 1:20**. If we substitute the word church for lampstand in **Revelation 11:4** it says, in effect, "These are the two olive trees and the two churches". I've kind of wondered what the significance of that might be and my best guess is that possibly they represent the two groups of people that are referred to in the next chapter – some of who go to the place of safety and the rest who Satan goes after in the Great Tribulation.

Coming back to Zechariah's prophecy in chapter 4, there are some encouraging points we can draw from it. If it is a dual prophecy we can see a fascinating parallel between what happened in Zechariah's day and what has happened in the end-time church of God. Just as Judah went into Babylon we have also seen our former association go into a kind of spiritual Babylon. A remnant of the Jews returned to rebuild the Temple of God in Zechariah's day. In like manner, a remnant of God's people in our time have had to come out and to rebuild the work and the church of God.

With that as background let's read **Zechariah 4** with an end-time context in mind beginning in **verse 6**:

So he answered and said to me: 'This *is* the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel: 'Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,' says the LORD of hosts...[dropping down to verse 8] Moreover the word of the LORD came to me, saying: 'The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this temple; His hands shall also finish *it*. Then you will know that the LORD of hosts has sent Me to you.'

This is God's work, not the work of any man and since it is His work He'll do whatever it takes to help us complete the job we have been given to do. We can have complete and utter faith in that. That doesn't just apply to the work of preaching the gospel but also refers

to the building up of the spiritual Temple – the church. However slowly it might happen at times, the Bride of Christ will be ready in time and we can have complete faith in that.

Going on to the next verse in **Zechariah 4** it says the following in **verse 9** something that would be familiar to many of us where God says: “For who has despised the day of small things?”

Back in the previous book written at the same time God says in **Haggai 2:3**:

Who is left among you who saw this temple in its former glory? And how do you see it now? In comparison with it, *is this* not in your eyes as nothing?

Do we have this attitude today regarding the size of the church and the work in comparison to how it was in our former association? Do we despise the day of small things now when we compare ourselves with the days when the church numbered 150 000 and the Plain Truth went out to millions of people each month?

If we go down further to **Haggai 2:7-9** God says:

‘I will fill this temple with glory,’ says the LORD of hosts. ‘The silver *is* Mine, and the gold *is* Mine,’ says the LORD of hosts. ‘The glory of this latter temple shall be greater than the former,’ says the LORD of hosts.

God almost always starts things out small but with a very big end in mind. In time the whole world will be ruled by God and people of all nations will become converted and what we had in our former association will be miniscule in comparison. God is far more interested now in the quality of our own personal conversion than He is in the quantity of people converted. This verse also speaks of the glory of the millennial Temple that Ezekiel saw in vision which will be even more spectacular than the Temple that Solomon built.

In **1 Corinthians 3:11-15** we read:

For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if anyone builds on this foundation *with* gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each one’s work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one’s work, of what sort it is. If anyone’s work which he has built on *it* endures, he will receive a reward. If anyone’s work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.”

These verses remind me a lot of the nursery rhyme about the wolf and the three little pigs who built their houses out of straw, wood and brick. The wolf went huff and buff and blew the first two houses down yet the one made of brick remained just like the character of gold and precious stones here in **1 Corinthians 3**.

When it comes to building His spiritual Temple God is intensely interested in building real depth and quality of conversion in each and every one of us from our elderly members to our young ones in the church. We could ask ourselves the question, “Is our interest in the truth of God and His way of life marked by shallowness and complacency or is it marked by passion and real depth of conviction?”

We are the Temple of God, and, as such, that has great implications for each of us in the church. Firstly, we have to be careful not to hurt or offend any of our fellow church members. Secondly, we must also not pollute our minds and our bodies with the sinful values and practices of this world. And finally, we have to be actively engaged in offering up spiritual sacrifices to our great God and being the kind of godly people that bring honour to Him since we truly are the Temple of God.

The Future End-Time Temple

Summarising the history of Palestine over the last century Melvin Rhodes writes the following in the UCG booklet **“The Middle East in Prophecy”**:

From 638 to 1917 Jerusalem was under Islamic rule except for a short period during the Crusades. Scattered throughout the nations, the Jewish people yearned to return to their homeland. Persecuted by governments and the Roman church, denied equal rights, frequently expelled from the new nations in which they had settled, the Jewish people's suffering continued down through the centuries.

Toward the end of the 19th century Jews began to return to their traditional homeland as the Zionist movement was born. Under the rule of the declining Ottoman Turks, the returning Jews joined other Jews who had remained in the area for centuries. They prospered and grew in number.

In 1917, after the defeat of the Ottoman Turks, the area came under the control of the British. In the same year, the British government announced the Balfour Declaration, named for the British foreign secretary Arthur Balfour, which promised Zionists a national homeland in Palestine. Meanwhile, encouraging Arab revolt against the Ottoman Turks who had sided with Germany in World War I, the British were making promises to the Arabs of independence, offering them their own homelands—two promises that would prove violently contradictory.

During the three decades of British rule the Jewish population in the area continued to grow—and to be increasingly seen as a threat by the native Arab population. Clashes between the two ethnic groups became more and more frequent. Jewish resistance against British rule and unmanageable civil strife led to a British withdrawal and the division of Palestine by the United Nations. The 1947 UN-approved Resolution 181 called for partitioning the British-ruled Palestine Mandate into a Jewish state and an Arab state and for Jerusalem to be an international UN-administered city. The resolution was accepted by the Jews in Palestine, but rejected by the Arabs there and by all Arab states.

The Jewish nation of Israel was declared the evening of May 14-15, 1948, with a population of half a million. It was immediately attacked by armies from five Arab nations—Lebanon, Syria, Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Egypt. Israel triumphed, but decades of violence were to follow, with additional wars in 1956, 1967, 1973 and 1982. Arab resentment at Israel's existence remains unresolved, the Jewish state still insecure in a troubled, hostile region (p.14).

The online Wikipedia (<http://www.wikipedia.org>) in its article on Jerusalem tells us about how Jerusalem became a divided city after the 1948 Arab-Israel war instead of an international city proposed by the United Nations:

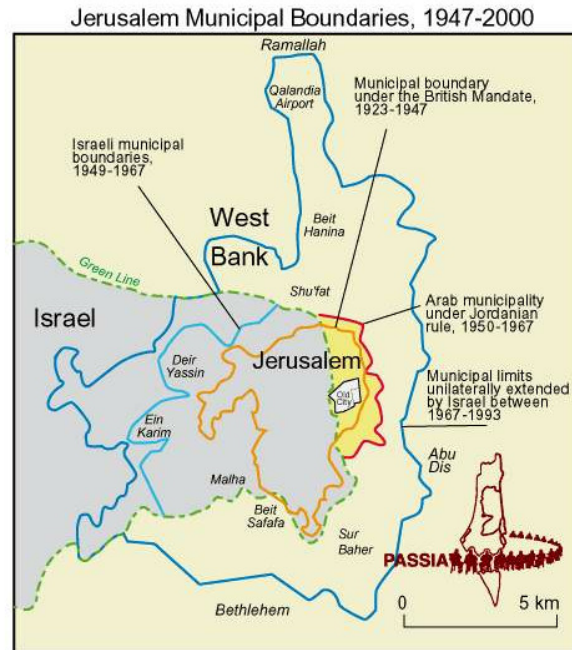
Following the 1948 Arab-Israeli War, when a Palestinian-Arab state failed to materialize and the British Mandate of Palestine was invaded by Egypt and Jordan, Jerusalem was divided.

The Western half of the New City became part of the new state of Israel, while the eastern half, along with the Old City, was annexed by Jordan. Jordan did not allow Jewish access to the Western Wall (also known to non-Jews as the Wailing Wall) and Temple Mount, Judaism's holiest sites, in the Old City (**Article – Jerusalem**).

The Arabs were never happy with the presence of the Jewish state in Palestine. After threatening events by Egypt, Israel launched a pre-emptive strike in 1967 (the Six Day War) and when Jordan retaliated, Israel counterattacked and took over the West Bank, Golan Heights and control over all of the old city of Jerusalem.

East Jerusalem, **including the WHOLE of the Old City**, was captured by the Israel Defense Force in the Six Day War of 1967. Between 1948 and 1967 it was controlled by Jordan. Since 1967 it has been under Israeli control.

While New Jerusalem was divided between 1948 and 1967 the old walled city or Old Jerusalem has NOT been divided. It has been fully controlled by first Jordan and then Israel.



The Jews currently and mistakenly believe that the Temple of Solomon's day was on the Temple Mount where the Dome of the Rock is. Many of the Jews have wanted to pray on the Temple Mount where the Dome of the Rock is but the Israeli government holds its own people back from doing so in order not to incite the Arabs into another war.

The end-time revival of the Roman Empire (**Daniel 2, 7, Revelation 13, 17**) – the coming United Europe – is the King of the North during the Great Tribulation. The context of the end of **Daniel 11** showing the countries that are conquered by the King of the North tell us that the King of the South will be an alliance of Arab nations. Let's now read about how the Great Tribulation is triggered off.

In **Daniel 11:40-43** we read: "At the time of the end the king of the South shall attack [or push, KJV] him; and the king of the North shall come against him like a whirlwind, with chariots, horsemen, and with many ships; and he shall enter the **countries**, overwhelm *them*, and pass through. He shall also enter the Glorious Land, and many *countries* shall be overthrown; but these shall escape from his hand: Edom, Moab, and the prominent people of Ammon. He shall stretch out his hand against the countries, and the land of Egypt shall not escape. He shall have power over the treasures of gold and silver, and over all the precious things of Egypt; also the Libyans and Ethiopians *shall follow* at his heels."



An Arab power known as the King of the South at the end of **Daniel 11** will push or attack this power for whatever reason. This war begins with this United Europe sweeping through the Middle East and invading many countries including Israel. Like the Germans in World War 2 it will be blitzkrieg or “lightning war”.

In this prophecy we read of Edom who are today’s Palestinians and Turks. Moab and Ammon is modern-day Jordan. These peoples who have close ties with Europe will be allowed to remain independent after Europe’s Middle East invasion. Egypt, Libya and Ethiopia will be conquered and occupied by European forces (**Daniel 11:42-43**).

Europe and the Vatican are much more sympathetic to the cause of the Palestinians who want complete control of part of Palestine than they are to Israel’s cause. Turkey has also been considered for membership in the European Union. Moab and Ammon are the Jordanians who have been more moderate since the 1967 war and have become a progressive, peaceful and modern nation under King Hussein and his son Abdullah who took over after his father’s death. Keith Stump makes these comments about Daniel’s prophecy about the end-time:

“Why will Europe feel compelled to intervene in the Middle East? Here prophecy is silent. Europe’s ire might well be precipitated by a sudden cut-off of vital oil supplies—the industrial lifeblood of the Continent. Or it might be triggered by some sort of jihad—‘holy war’—waged against the West by Muslim fundamentalists. Or possibly European forces will intervene in the Middle East under the pretext of ‘peacekeeping’—in an attempt to end escalating regional hostilities before they spiral out of control. Whatever the provocation, prophecy reveals that Europe will act swiftly to protect its interests—dispatching troops into the Middle East!

“The European power—this king of the north or Beast—will occupy both the state of Israel and some of her Arab neighbours, according to this clear prophecy of Daniel. Europe will attempt to impose peace on the war-torn Middle East—by force of arms! The Beast will seek to do what diplomats and statesmen have failed to do. In some quarters, the Beast might even be welcomed as a kind of saviour!” (**The Middle East in Prophecy, p.33**).

Melvin Rhodes makes these comments about the passage in **Daniel 11:40-43**:

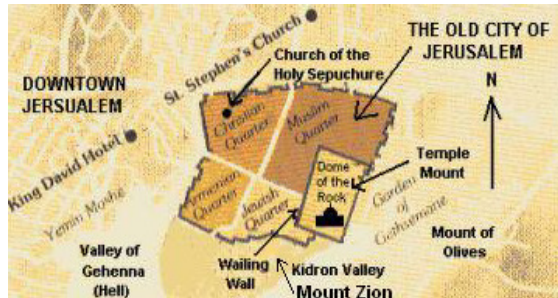
[The] end-time king of the South will rise up to defy the West, striking out against the king of the North. Whoever the end-time king of the South might be—whether a popular figure similar to Osama bin Laden, a political leader as were Gamal Abdel Nasser and Saddam Hussein, or a religious figure such as the Ayatollah Khomeini or the prophesied mahdi to come—someone will engage in this final conflict against the West—possibly in yet another attempt to bring about long-sought Arab and Islamic unity. He will unwittingly set in motion a cascade of events that will lead to unimaginable carnage before Jesus Christ intervenes to put a stop to it...

What is evident, however, is that this end-time leader from the south will attack the north in such a way as to warrant a major military invasion of the Middle East. Considering the ways Islamic extremists have attacked the Western powers in recent years, something like a series of major terror attacks against European targets could be the ‘push’ referred to here (**The Middle East in Bible Prophecy, p.29**).

This prophecy shows that Europe will continue on and conquer Libya. This will partly be for strategic purposes. The Roman Empire did a similar thing by conquering North Africa and maintaining control over the whole Mediterranean coastline and sea. By conquering Ethiopia and possibly Arabia this European power will also be able to control all of the Red Sea. Prophecy is silent as to whether or not it continues on from Ethiopia and conquers more of Africa later on in this final world war.

The prophet Zechariah tells us the following about what will happen to the city of Jerusalem in the end time:

Behold, the day of the LORD is coming, and your spoil will be divided in your midst. For I will gather all the nations to battle against Jerusalem; The city shall be taken, the houses rifled, and the women ravished. **Half of the city shall go into captivity**, but the remnant of the people shall not be cut off from the city (**Zechariah 14:1-2**).



Zechariah speaks of half of the city going into captivity. Does this mean New Jerusalem including the modern suburbs outside of the old city or does it refer to only the old city?

Currently BOTH the old city and the new city is fully controlled by Israel. It is not divided as it will be at the time of this future prophecy. Europe and the Vatican are much more sympathetic to the cause of the Palestinians who want complete control of part of Palestine than they are to Israel's cause.

Europe is mainly interested in the Christian and Armenian quarters and may give control of the Arab and Jewish quarters over to the Palestinians if they don't win it through negotiation before the Great Tribulation.

In **Matthew 24** Jesus Christ gave a long prophecy detailing events that would occur leading up to His return. In this chapter he spoke of an event called the abomination of desolation. He said:

Then Jesus went out and departed from the temple, and His disciples came up to show Him the buildings of the temple. And Jesus said to them, 'Do you not see all these things? Assuredly, I say to you, not *one* stone shall be left here upon another, that shall not be thrown down.' Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, 'Tell us, when will these things be? And what *will be* the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?'...

Therefore when you see the 'abomination of desolation,' spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (whoever reads, let him understand), then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. Let him who is on the housetop not go down to take anything out of his house. And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes. But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! And pray that your flight may not be in winter or on the Sabbath. For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be (**Matthew 24:1-3, 15-22**).

The prophecies that He spoke were dual and answered two different questions that the disciples had asked Him. The first question was “When will these things be?”, referring to the destruction of the Temple where one stone would not be left on top of one another. This occurred in **70 AD** when the Romans destroyed the city of Jerusalem and the Temple that was standing in Jesus' day.

The second question was “What *will be* the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?” The disciples expected the Kingdom of God would come in their lifetime.

Jesus spoke of “the 'abomination of desolation' spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place”. We read of this in **Daniel 11:31**:

“And forces shall be mustered by him, and they shall defile the sanctuary fortress; then they shall take away the daily *sacrifices*, and place *there* the abomination of desolation.”

According to the UCG booklet “Is the Bible True?”:

This refers to the momentous events of **December 16, 168 B.C.**, when a crazed [Antiochus Epiphanes – Greek ruler of Syria] entered Jerusalem and killed 80 000 men, women and children (2 Maccabees 5:11-14).

He then desecrated the temple by offering a sacrifice [swine or pig flesh] to a pagan god, Jupiter Olympus. This outrage was a forerunner of a comparable event that Jesus Christ said would occur in the last days (**Matthew 24:15**) (p.21).

Jesus prophecy and another of Daniel's prophecies shows that there will be yet more “abomination of desolation” that will occur in the end-time. We read of the end-time abomination of desolation in **Daniel 12:11** which says:

And from the time *that* the daily *sacrifice* is taken away, and the abomination of desolation is set up, *there shall be* **one thousand two hundred and ninety days**.

Since the Great Tribulation is to last 3 ½ years it appears as if the abomination of desolation by the coming United Europe, will occur 1290 days (43 months) before the return of Jesus Christ. In **Revelation 11:1-3** we read:

Then I was given a reed like a measuring rod. And the angel stood, saying, Rise and measure the temple of God, the altar, and those who worship there. But leave out the court which is outside the temple, and do not measure it, for it has been given to the Gentiles. And they will tread the holy city underfoot *for* **forty-two months**.

In **Daniel 12:7** we read:

Then I heard the man clothed in linen, who *was* above the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand to heaven, and swore by Him who lives

forever, that *it shall be for a time, times, and half a time*; and when the power of the holy people has been completely shattered, all these *things* shall be finished.

Jerusalem will be trampled underfoot by the Gentiles and the power of the holy people (Israel) will be shattered for a time, times and half a time before Jesus Christ returns. A time is a year, times refers to two years and half a time refers to half a year. In total that is 3 ½ years, which according to **Revelation 11:3**, is equivalent to 42 months and to 1260 days according to **Revelation 12:6-14**.

We see from these verses we see that the abomination of desolation occurs 1290 days before Jesus Christ returns and then a month later (1260 days before Christ's return) Europe invades the Middle East. Raymond McNair makes these comments on the end-time abomination of desolation:

It appears, then, that some form of Temple worship will first be reinstituted by the Jews. Otherwise, how could the sacrifices be 'cut off'? However, whether there will be an actual temple—or just a sacrificial altar as in the days of Ezra—is not certain. Yet a strong argument can be made for the former since the Apostle Paul says that the final 'man of sin'—the false religious leader...who will be in partnership with the Beast dictator—will enthrone himself 'as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God' (**2 Thessalonians 2:4**)

It should be noted that quite a number of Jews are right now engaged in reproducing implements of Levitical worship and drawing up plans for a new house of worship on the Temple Mount. If they do actually build a temple or altar in the years to come, this would certainly fan the flames of Arab hatred toward Israel. And it should be easy to see if Europe's leaders make any pretence of promoting Jewish temple worship, Islamic fundamentalists might well be driven to violent action (**The Coming War for the City of Peace, World Ahead, Sept-Oct. 1997, p.20**).

Let's have a closer look at the prophecy spoken of by the apostle Paul in **2 Thessalonians 2:3-4**:

Let no one deceive you by any means; for *that Day will not come* unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God **IN the temple of God**, showing himself that he is God.



The "man of sin", who is most likely the false prophet who will rule the great false church that works hand-in-hand with the coming United Europe, sits as God **IN** the temple of God. Personally I clearly see this as a real Temple and not just some tent or altar for making sacrifices.

Could he defile the Temple by sitting in the place where the Ark of the Covenant was in the Holy of Holies where God symbolically dwells in the Temple? Might that be the abomination spoken of like Antiochus Epiphanes placing a statue of Zeus in the Temple? The abomination of desolation is spoken as something standing, rather than sitting, in the holy place so it probably is something different, perhaps a Catholic idol like a crucifix with the false image of Jesus.

There has been a mystery that has puzzled me for quite some time regarding Bible prophecy. It has to do with the timing of the end-time abomination of desolation referred to in **Daniel 12:11**. What has puzzled me is why, when one puts all the verses together, it appears to say that the abomination of desolation occurs 30 days before the conquest of Jerusalem by the beast power and not at the same time or soon thereafter.

Is there a month between the beginning and end of the conquering of Palestine? Another possibility that I have heard is that the conquering of Jerusalem and the abomination of desolation both occur 1290 days before Christ's return and that the shattering of the holy people 1260 days before Christ's return refers to the conquest of America and Britain by the beast power.

Revelation 11:2, however, clearly tells us that the conquering of Jerusalem and Palestine does not begin at the same time as the abomination of desolation (1290 days before Christ's return) but a month after.

It says in **Revelation 11:2**: "But leave out the court which is outside the temple, and do not measure it, for it has been given to the Gentiles. And they will tread the holy city underfoot *for forty-two months*." Now if we multiply 42 by 30 days we come up with 1260 days, not 1290 days ($1290 / 42 = 30.7$ so this doesn't match).

So here we have a mystery. How is it that the beast power will set up some kind of abominable thing in Jerusalem a month before they actually come in and conquer Jerusalem?

In the end-time could it be another party that causes the abomination of desolation such as the Arabs? I don't think so for two reasons.

Firstly, Islam is a monotheistic religion that doesn't use or tolerate idols in its worship of Allah. Secondly, it didn't happen in the past and **2 Thessalonians 2:3-4** infers that it will again occur at the hands of the beast power and the religious power that will work alongside with it.

One alternate interpretation is that the abomination of desolation in the end time merely refers to the desolation of the holy place or holy city, Jerusalem, based on **Luke 21:20**. The armies could be standing in the holy place but how does one explain the term "set up" in **Daniel 12:11** if the abomination of desolation is merely the desolation of Jerusalem?

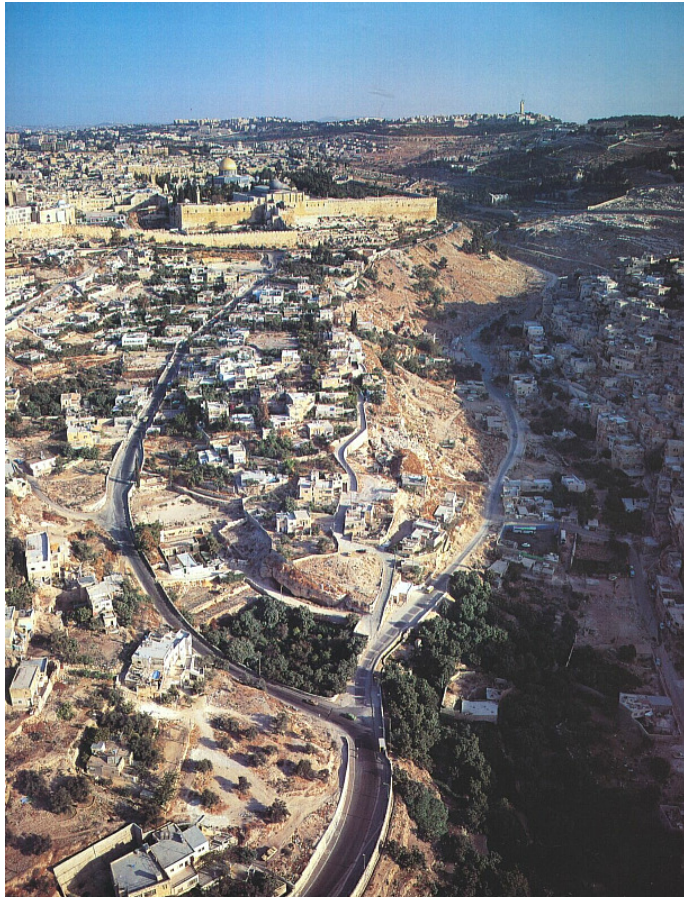
The word "temple" in **2 Thessalonians 2:4** can also be rendered "sanctuary" so the false prophet sits in the sanctuary of God – the Holy Land as it mentions in **Daniel 11:45** where he sets up his tabernacle. There is, according to this interpretation, no need for a Temple to be built and no need for sacrifices that have to be stopped. Why? Because the word sacrifice in **Daniel 12:11** is in italics and therefore not in the original Hebrew. It merely says the daily will be stopped and this could refer to the daily worship at the Wailing Wall.

The only problem with this interpretation is that it doesn't explain the clear timing differential we have already proven from comparing **Daniel 12:11** with **Revelation 11:2** to show that the abomination of desolation occurs a month before the Gentile armies of the King of the North move in and conquer Jerusalem.

So what kind of scenario can we come up with to put them all together and explain all these clues? The following scenario represents my best guess that is consistent with all the clues we have just gone through.

The Jews have longed to rebuild the Temple of God where they believe it stood on the Temple Mount where the Dome of the Rock is now. I have heard that there are less publicized Jewish settlements that surround east Jerusalem and that the Israelis are planning to more completely take control of the east half of the old city of Jerusalem, possibly even take over the Temple Mount complex to rebuild the Temple where the Dome of the Rock stands. Such a drastic action may not be necessary for a Temple to be rebuilt.

If the clear-cut research and conclusions of Ernest Martin were to be accepted by the Jewish religious authorities it would open up the possibility of the Temple being rebuilt by the Jews where it really did stand above the Gihon spring WITHOUT THE NEED TO DESTROY THE DOME OF THE ROCK!



Another point to consider is what might happen if the Ark of the Covenant was to be found? Prior to the conquest of Jerusalem by David the tabernacle of God was in Shiloh for many centuries. The presence of God was symbolized not by Mount Moriah but by where the Ark of the Covenant was.

The last time the Ark of the Covenant is mentioned in the Bible is in **2 Chronicles 35:3** in the days of King Josiah of Judah. Its location was not known after the exiles returned from Babylon.

There are traditions that one of the prophets buried the Ark in one of the hundreds of caves underneath the city of Jerusalem shortly before Jerusalem was conquered by the Babylonians.

The second book of Maccabees tells us that Jeremiah had the Ark buried east of the Jordan not to be discovered again until “God gathers his people together again and shows his mercy and the glory of the Lord and the cloud will appear” which Isaiah prophesied would occur at the beginning of the millennium (**Isaiah 4:4-5**). The author of 2 Maccabees writes:

One finds in the records that Jeremiah the prophet ordered those who were being deported to take some of the fire [from the altar of the Temple], as has been told, and that the prophet after giving them the law instructed those who were being deported not to forget the commandments of the Lord, nor to be led astray in their thoughts upon seeing the gold and silver statues and their adornment [that were discovered within the Temple itself – that is, there were images and idols in the Temple and

some God had commanded to be there]. And with other similar words he [Jeremiah] exhorted them that the law should not depart from their hearts.

It was also in the writing that the prophet, having received an oracle, ordered that the tent and the ark [of the covenant with the two cherubs] should follow with him, and that he went out to the mountain where Moses had gone up [Mt Nebo east of the Jordan] and had seen the inheritance of God.

And Jeremiah came and found a cave, and he brought there the tent and the ark [of the covenant with the two cherubs] and the altar of incense, and he sealed up the entrance. Some of those who followed him came up to mark the way, but could not find it.

When Jeremiah learned of it, he rebuked them and declared: 'The place shall be unknown until God gathers his people together again and shows his mercy. And then the Lord will disclose these things, and the glory of the Lord and the cloud will appear, as they were shown in the case of Moses, and as Solomon asked that the place should be specially consecrated.' It was also made clear that being possessed of wisdom Solomon offered sacrifice for the dedication and completion of the temple. Just as Moses prayed to the Lord, and fire came down from heaven and devoured the sacrifices, so also Solomon prayed, and the fire came down and consumed the whole burnt offerings **(2 Maccabees 2:1-7 RSV).**

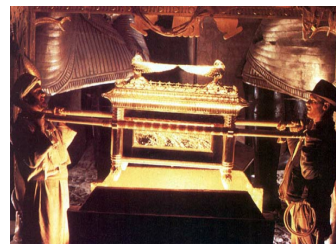
Jeremiah prophesied the following that indicates that the Ark of the Covenant might not be found in this age prior to Christ's return:

Turn, O backsliding children, saith the LORD; for I am married unto you: and I will take you one of a city, and two of a family, and I will bring you to Zion: And I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding. And it shall come to pass, when ye be multiplied and increased in the land, in those days, saith the LORD, **they shall say no more,** The ark of the covenant of the LORD: **neither shall it** [the Ark of the Covenant] **come to mind:** neither shall they remember it [the Ark of the Covenant]; neither shall they visit *it*; [the Ark of the Covenant] **neither shall that be done any more**". At that time they shall call Jerusalem the throne of the LORD; and all the nations shall be gathered unto it, to the name of the LORD, to Jerusalem: neither shall they walk any more after the imagination of their evil heart. In those days the house of Judah shall walk with the house of Israel, and they shall come together out of the land of the north to the land that I have given for an inheritance unto your fathers **(Jeremiah 3:14-18).**

The great Jewish master, Maimonides (born in **1134 AD**), makes this fascinating comment about the caves underneath the City of David where the Temple was:

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 [caves], a place in which to hide the Ark (Temples p.140).



There is every chance this may have happened and is still awaiting to be discovered underneath the true Temple site in the original City of David.

Judah Halevi (**1085-1140 AD**) in his lamentation wrote:

Sweet would it be unto my soul to walk naked and barefoot upon the desolate ruins where thy holiest dwellings were; **in the place of thine Ark where it is hidden** [Halevi believed the tradition that the Ark was hidden in the tunnels and caves underneath the Holy of Holies] and in the place of thy Cherubim which abode in thine innermost recesses.

There have also been reports that amateur archaeologist Ron Wyatt found the Ark of the Covenant in a cave underneath the skull hill just north of the city walls of Jerusalem and that he was pressured by the Israeli government to abandon any attempts to bring it out for fear of a major Arab-Jewish conflict. A future Israeli government may have a change of heart if this story is true.

Finding or creating a replica of the Ark of the Covenant is not an essential to have the Temple rebuilt as there was no such in Herod's Temple but hypothetically can you imagine the impact the discovery of the lost Ark of the Covenant might have on the Jewish people? If it was found do you think that the Israelis would put it in a museum? Highly unlikely. Surely given all the religious instructions regarding its treatment that include placing it in a holy place within a tabernacle they would construct some structure to house the Ark.

If a temple structure (even just a modest one at first) is constructed would not the Jews begin offering sacrifices just as it was in ancient times? In **2 Thessalonians 2:8-9** we read:

And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming. The coming of the *lawless one* is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders.

We are told here that the false prophet will have great miracle working powers given to him by Satan. Imagine a pope with magical powers and the impact that such a pope would have on the world. This lawless one appears to be the same person as the man of sin who presents himself as God in the Temple of God.

Now if this pope does enter the Temple of God and this happens in conjunction with the abomination of desolation how might he do so a month before the armies of Europe conquer Jerusalem and for what purpose – under what pretext might he do such a thing? We are told that he has miraculous power to do just about anything he wants to.

Now think about the impact of the Jews setting up a Temple in Jerusalem. The Jews will be on a great high feeling that God is with them again.

It won't be for supporting the Jews that Arab anger will lead to the attack of the King of the South upon the King of the North. That Europe leaves the Jordanians and Palestinians alone in their Middle East invasion shows they are supportive of the Palestinian cause, not the Jews. So what might lead to the violent anger of the King of the South (Arabs minus Jordan and the Palestinians) upon the King of the North?

Well, I have a theory that could kill two birds with one stone. It could explain why the false prophet comes to the Temple of God the Jews have built and what might arouse the anger of the Arabs against the Europeans. Here is my theory which I hasten to add is pure speculation though I also believe it to be an educated guess.

What if the false prophet, some future pope, was to use his miracle-working powers and seize it as a golden opportunity to show the ascendancy of Christianity (Catholicism) over the Jewish religion? What if he were to come down to Jerusalem and use his powers to take over the Temple of God? It would be an incredible public relations victory for the Catholic Church if he were to take over the Temple. It would “prove” that Christianity supercedes the Jewish religion and that the church are the true inheritors of the things of God such as possibly the Ark of the Covenant since the Jews killed and rejected Christ. Why stop the sacrifices? Well, Christ died once and for all and therefore animal sacrifices are no longer necessary.

So what is the abomination of desolation? It's described as something that is “set up” that is “standing in the holy place”. The false prophet will exalt himself in the Temple as it says in **2 Thessalonians 2:3-4**. What would he set up in the Temple to desecrate it? I think the most likely scenario is that this coming pope might place a throne for himself in the Holy of Holies, making Himself as God within it symbolically and behind it a large standing crucifix with the false image of Jesus.

Surely the leader of the United Europe will tap into the influence that the false prophet will have if he has miracle working powers and work with the Vatican and the church and the European state will be closely working together like in centuries past. Those kind of miracles by a future pope will undoubtedly shake Europeans out of their spiritual complacency and a religious revival will sweep through Europe.

A takeover by the pope of the Temple in Jerusalem would be seen by many Arabs as merely the first step towards a full takeover of Jerusalem by Europe and another crusade.

What if the false prophet to all the world watching on TV were to say the following after this hypothetical takeover of the Temple – “It's now time for Christianity to assert itself as the world's dominant religion and be the instrument to bring God's kingdom and peace to the world”?

Would that not be like a red flag to a bull for the Arabs who would see it as a declaration of holy war? Another crusade like the ones of the Middle Ages? It would also help put European people into a frame of mind to accept the coming conquests as being the will of God. The miracles of this future pope will be seen the world over on TV and the Arabs will see that miraculous power as a great threat. In “**The Middle East in Bible Prophecy**” Melvin Rhodes writes:

What is evident, however, is that this end-time leader from the south will attack the north in such a way as to warrant a major military invasion of the Middle East. Considering the ways Islamic extremists have attacked the Western powers in recent years, something like a series of major terror attacks against European targets could be the ‘push’ referred to here (p. 29).

The United Europe will feel justified in taking over the Middle East to neutralize the terrorist threat once and for all. Europe will conquer the Middle East but will leave the Jordanians and Palestinians alone (at least, for a little while in their mind).

After such a drastic takeover of the Middle East and conquest of Israel how will America and Britain react? America have long been Israel's most staunch ally. One would think that they would take a stand against Europe on this matter.

Possibly a month later (**Hosea 5:5-7**) this United Europe, the beast power, launches the unthinkable – a surprise nuclear attack on every major American city at the same time (**Ezekiel 6:6**) and the time of Jacob's trouble will begin when not just the Jews but the House of Israel (America, Britain, Canada, Australia, NW Europe) will go into captivity at the hands of the beast power (**Jeremiah 30:3-7**).

The attack on America will probably be justified by pointing out the degree to which it has poisoned the morality of the world with its movies, television shows and pornography that have been undermining traditional Christian values. After such an attack one can see how **Revelation 13:3-4** will be fulfilled where it says:

And all the world marveled and followed the beast. So they worshiped the dragon who gave authority to the beast; and they worshiped the beast, saying, 'Who *is* like the beast? Who is able to make war with him?'

Following the conquest of the Middle East and North America and presumably with Catholic Latin America supporting it and Africa at its heels, world domination will be in sight for the beast power. Only one great continent stands in its way – Asia (**Daniel 11:44, Revelation 9**).

Over the next three years the battle for world domination will lead to the battle that the world refers to as Armageddon (**Revelation 16:12-16, Joel 3**).

At that critical point in world history when mankind stands at the brink of annihilation Jesus Christ will return to put an end to the age of man's misrule of our planet (**Zechariah 14**) and bring the Kingdom of God to earth and finally bring peace to this world.

Jerusalem will be the focal point for this climactic battle between the armies of man misled by Satan and the spiritual armies led by Jesus Christ.

The great Eastern armies meet the armies of Europe already deployed in the Middle East on the ancient battleground of Armageddon (the Jezreel Valley in northern Israel). At this critical juncture in time Jesus Christ returns and they are stirred up by Satan and the demons to perceive Jesus Christ as a common enemy (as an Antichrist or invader from outer space). They proceed to Jerusalem to fight Him and are defeated by Christ and all the resurrected saints who come with Him. The very last plague is poured with the voice of the seventh angel crying out:

"It is done!" [The greatest earthquake of all time rocks the whole earth!] And there were noises and thunderings and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such a mighty and great earthquake as had not occurred since men were on the earth...Then every island fled away and the mountains were not found. And great hail from heaven fell upon men, *each hailstone* about the weight of a talent (**Revelation 16:18-21**).

Combined with this earthquake will be an incredible shower of hailstones (meteorites ?) with some weighing as much as a talent or 100 pounds. **Isaiah 24:19-20** says that:

"The earth is shaken exceedingly. The earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard."

This earthquake will cause the Mount of Olives to split in two and shake Jerusalem like the mighty earthquake of Uzziah's time. The prophet Zechariah wrote about this great future earthquake:

Then the LORD will go forth and fight against those nations, as He fights in the day of battle. And in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which faces Jerusalem on the east. **And the Mount of Olives shall be split in two, From east to west, making a very large valley; half of the mountain shall move toward the north and half of it toward the south.**

Then you shall flee *through* My mountain valley, for the mountain valley shall reach to Azal. Yes, you shall flee as you fled from the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah. Thus the LORD my God will come, *and* all the saints with You...All the land shall be turned into a plain from Geba to Rimmon south of Jerusalem. **Jerusalem shall be raised up and inhabited in her place (Zechariah 14:3-5, 10).**

There will be major topographical changes. The double mountain we know as the Mount of Olives will split in two with half moving north (the northern summit probably) and half moving south (the southern summit). This may bring the southern summit due east of the true Temple site over the Gihon Spring. We are told elsewhere that there will be a river that flows east and west of Jerusalem (**Ezekiel 47**). The eastern branch that flows to the Dead Sea probably will flow through the valley created by the earthquake. We are also told that Jerusalem will be raised up in elevation as well.

Jesus Christ returns to the earth with the sound of a mighty trumpet (**1 Thessalonians 4:16**) in power and glory as the hills and mountains melt and wax at His return (**Psalms 97:5**) due to the phenomenal volcanic activity shaking the earth at this time.

In **Zechariah 14:7** it says that at even time it shall be light. This may be due to Christ's brightness filling the sky, making it like day or we may see something like a repeat of Joshua's long day. In such a dramatic awesome spectacle God intervenes in human affairs and ushers in the Wonderful World Tomorrow.

Then will come the great Exodus of all 12 tribes of Israel back to Palestine of which the Exodus of Moses' day was a forerunner (**Jeremiah 16:14-15, Isaiah 11:11-15**). Christ will deal with Israel first and only later begin to work with the Gentiles.

Before entering Palestine God will first bring Israel into the wilderness and prepare them for entry into the Holy Land (**Ezekiel 20:33-37**). At Mt Sinai God proposed the old covenant to ancient Israel. When God brings modern Israel into the wilderness for a time before they move into the Holy Land He will propose to them the new covenant to which they will agree to (**Jeremiah 31:31-34**). This time around God will give Israel the Holy Spirit and they will have the heart to be able to live God's way and keep the terms of the new covenant.

This preparation in the wilderness when Christ proposes the new covenant may last 3 ½ years according to the 70 weeks prophecy of **Daniel 9:26-27**. Using the day for a year prophecy principle (**Ezekiel 4:6**) we see that the last week is 7 years. There were 483 years (69 prophetic weeks - 483 prophetic days) from the decree to rebuild Jerusalem after the Jews Babylonian captivity to the beginning of Christ's ministry in late **26 AD**.

Christ preached about the new covenant (**Matthew 26:28**) during His ministry and was cut off in the middle of the week (3 ½ years later) when crucified, so for Him personally to complete the confirming of the covenant for a week it seems likely that this may occur at the beginning of the millennium with the whole House of Israel.

There does appear to be a dual application of the 70 weeks prophecy indicated by the frequent references to the abomination of desolation in the second half of each of verses 26 and 27 of Daniel 9 indicating that the beast power may make a covenant with the Jews in the state of Israel 3 ½ years before the Great Tribulation begins and then break that covenant when it stops the sacrifices and invades the Holy Land. A likely possibility of what such a covenant might be could be making Jerusalem an international city which the Vatican has in the past offered to mediate on and be the governing authority to help make it work.

Some time after they are settled into Palestine and beginning to prosper the remainder of the Russian and Asian armies will come and try and conquer the returned Israelites (**Ezekiel 38, 39**). God will fight for Israel and defeat them and from there on will be a millennium of peace and prosperity.

They will rebuild the destroyed cities (**Isaiah 61:4, Jeremiah 33:7**) and the world's population will rapidly expand once again (**Isaiah 27:6**) as Christ sets up the Kingdom of God here on earth and rules the world from Jerusalem which will become a great city.

The Millennial Temple

The prophet Ezekiel starting in **Ezekiel 40** was given a vision of what a new Temple would look like at the time that Jesus Christ returns and the millennium begins. God gives him extraordinary details of a coming temple complex and a new arrangement of the Holy Land that was quite different than what they knew from the past.

In his vision he is set on "a very high mountain" which could well be the original City of David on the SE spur. At the south end of this same mountain is a city and he finds himself at the eastern gate of the outer court. His tour begins at this outer eastern gate.

A common feature of ancient gates was a series of rooms to the side and above it. These were for both defensive and administrative purposes. Judges, including kings who would come to these rooms at appointed times, would often render judgments in these gate rooms hence the term "sitting in the gate". Examples of people sitting in the gate rendering judgments include Lot (**Genesis 19:1**) and the husband of the Proverbs 31 woman (**Proverbs 31:23**).

The outer eastern gate has three rooms either side of it (**Ezekiel 40:6:16**). He then enters the outer court. There is a pavement on the inside of the outer court and the outside of the inner court. Between the two pavements on the north, south and east sides is a distance of 100 cubits (**Ezekiel 40:17-19**).

The Bible Reading Program (Ezekiel 40) has this to say about the possible size of the cubit in this description which is larger than the standard cubit of 18 or 20 inches:

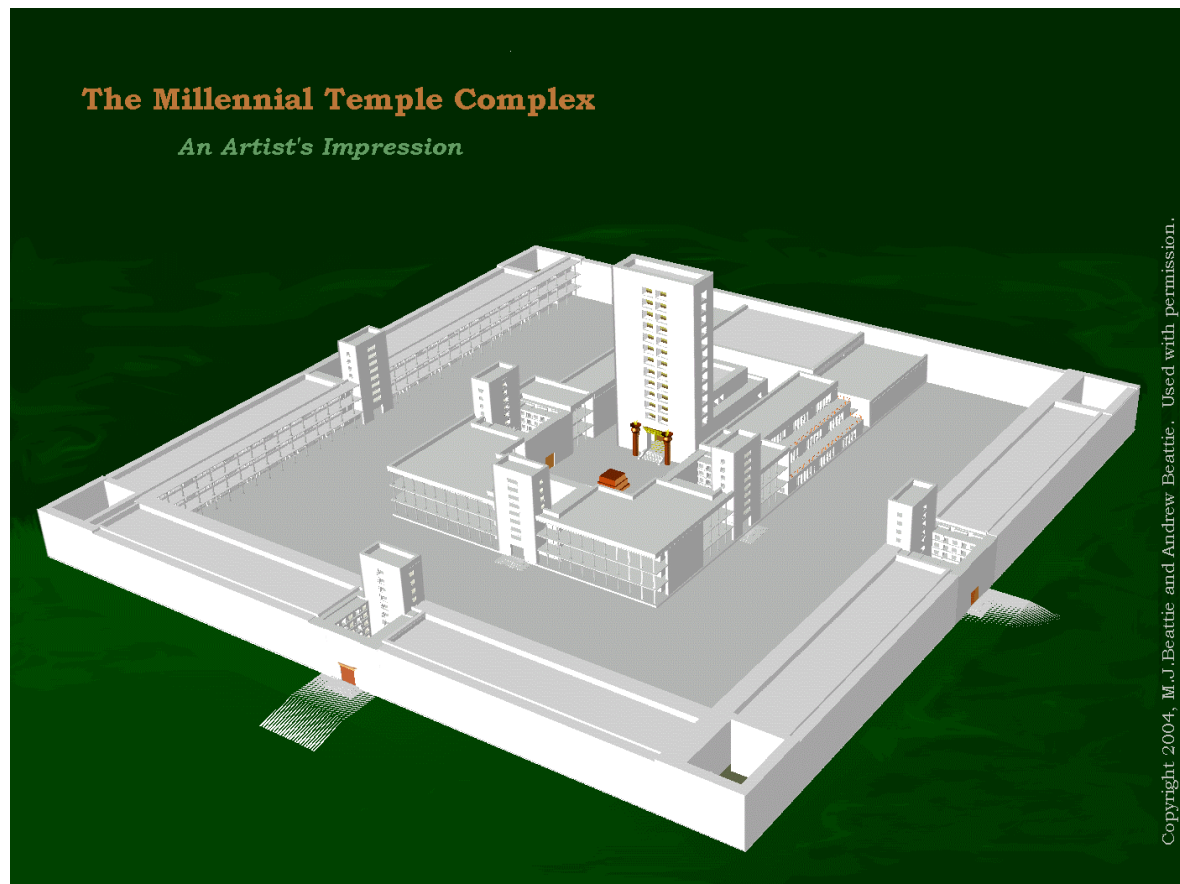
The length of the measuring rod is given as six cubits. There is some dispute about the size of a cubit. Many consider a cubit to have been 18 inches...We are proceeding on the assumption of a seven-palm, 25.2-inch cubit, as described in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 11th edition, article "Weights and Measures." Some may insist this is too long, but the relative proportions of the buildings remain the same

regardless of which cubit size is used. And with the seven-palm cubit, rooms that appear to be bed-chambers turn out to have the square footage of modern college dormitory rooms; rooms used for private dining are just over 12 feet square; the tables used for holding the instruments for sacrifice come to a reasonable work table height and the tables for the showbread (**Exodus 25:23**) would have been as a normal countertop or buffet table in height. Using a much smaller cubit would yield some uncomfortably small rooms and furnishings. With the seven-palm, 25.2-inch cubit, the measuring rod used by Ezekiel's guide is 12.6 feet long.

If we use this 25 inch cubit then the Temple, which is 500 x 500 cubits square, is over 1000 x 1000 feet square. Using an 18 inch cubit it is 750 x 750 feet square, still considerably larger than Herod's Temple which was 600 x 600 feet square.

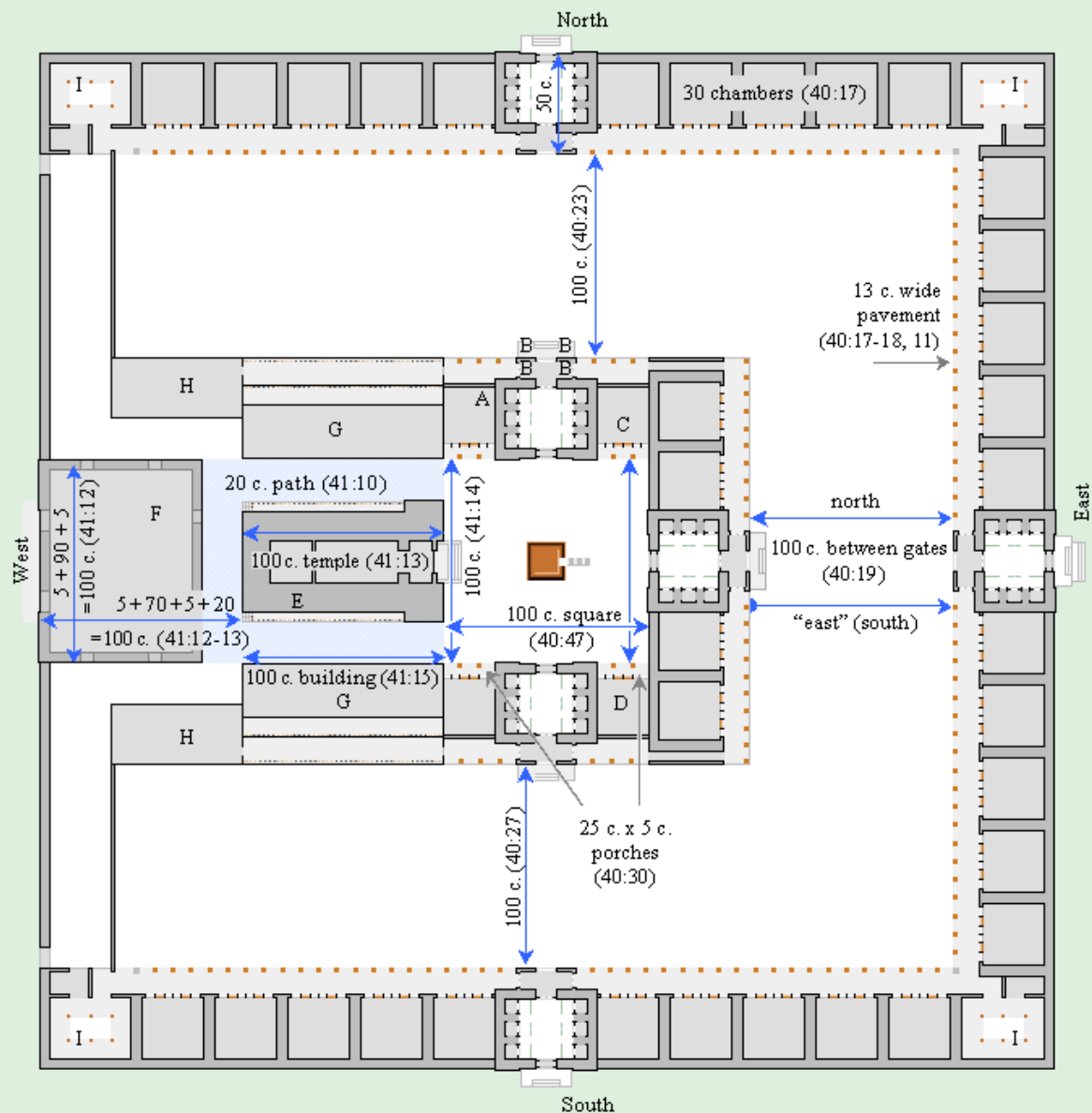
The tour then proceeds to the proceeds to the outer northern gate and the outer southern gate which are identical to the outer eastern gate (**Ezekiel 40:20-27**). Within the perimeter formed by the outer gate there are 30 other chambers (**Ezekiel 40:17**) aside from the small rooms within each gate.

The tour then proceeds to the gates of the inner courts on the north, south and east sides which are identical to the gates of the outer court (**Ezekiel 40:28-37**). There are chambers preparing the offering in the gates and chambers for singers and priests adjacent to the north and south gates of the inner court (**Ezekiel 40:38-46**). The inner court is 100 cubits square and in the middle of the inner court is the Altar of Burnt Offering (**Ezekiel 40:47**).



The Millennial Temple Complex

As Shown to Ezekiel



- | | |
|------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| A. washroom for burnt offerings (40:38; Leviticus 1:9, 13) | G. priests' holy chambers for dining (42:1-14) |
| B. slaughtering places (40:39-43; Leviticus 1:11) | H. priests' place for cooking trespass, sin and grain offerings (46:19-20) |
| C. singers' chamber (temple priests, 40:44-45) | I. cooking courtyards where temple servants cook the people's sacrifices (46:21-24) |
| D. singers' chamber (altar priests, 40:46) | |
| E. side chambers (41:5-11) | |
| F. storehouse (1 Chronicles 26:17; Nehemiah 10:38) | |

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The tour then proceeds into the Holy Place or the Sanctuary where only the priests can enter. **The Bible Reading Program (Ezekiel 41)** gives these comments describing the Sanctuary:

The temple sanctuary building itself is not described in detail in Ezekiel. But it is described enough to recognize that the design is very much like that of both the tabernacle and the temple Solomon built. This makes sense when we realize that the designs of these earlier structures were given by God to reflect the pattern of the heavenly temple (**see Exodus 25:8-9; 26:30; 1 Chronicles 28:11-12, 19; Hebrews 8:5**). To get a full picture of Ezekiel's temple, it is often necessary to refer to details given elsewhere about the first temple, and even the tabernacle.

For example, the height of the vestibule or “porch” (the entrance hall structure) of the future temple is not given in Ezekiel. It is described in 2 Chronicles 3:4 as being 120 cubits in height [If the millennial Temple’s porch is 120 cubits and a cubit here is the 25.2 inch cubit that would make it as tall as a modern 25-story building.]

The lobby of this entrance hall is described by **Ezekiel 40:49** as having inside dimensions of 11 x 20 cubits (23 x 42 feet).

Ezekiel now enters the Holy Place from the vestibule (verses 1-2). There are only two rooms in the temple sanctuary, each 20 cubits (42 feet) in width. The first, called elsewhere the Holy Place, is 20 x 40 cubits (42 x 84 feet). The height is given in **1 Kings 6:2** as 30 cubits (63 feet). In the tabernacle and first temple, it contained the table of showbread, the seven-branched lampstand or menorah and the altar of incense. Only the incense altar is mentioned here (**Ezekiel 41:22**), but that could be because it is specifically mentioned as being larger. Perhaps the other furnishings, if present, were the same as Ezekiel already knew them to be from the first temple.

The inner room (**verses 3-4**), called the Most Holy Place or Holy of Holies, is a square 20 x 20 cubits. According to **1 Kings 6:20** its height is also 20 cubits. In the tabernacle and first temple it contained the Ark of the Covenant.

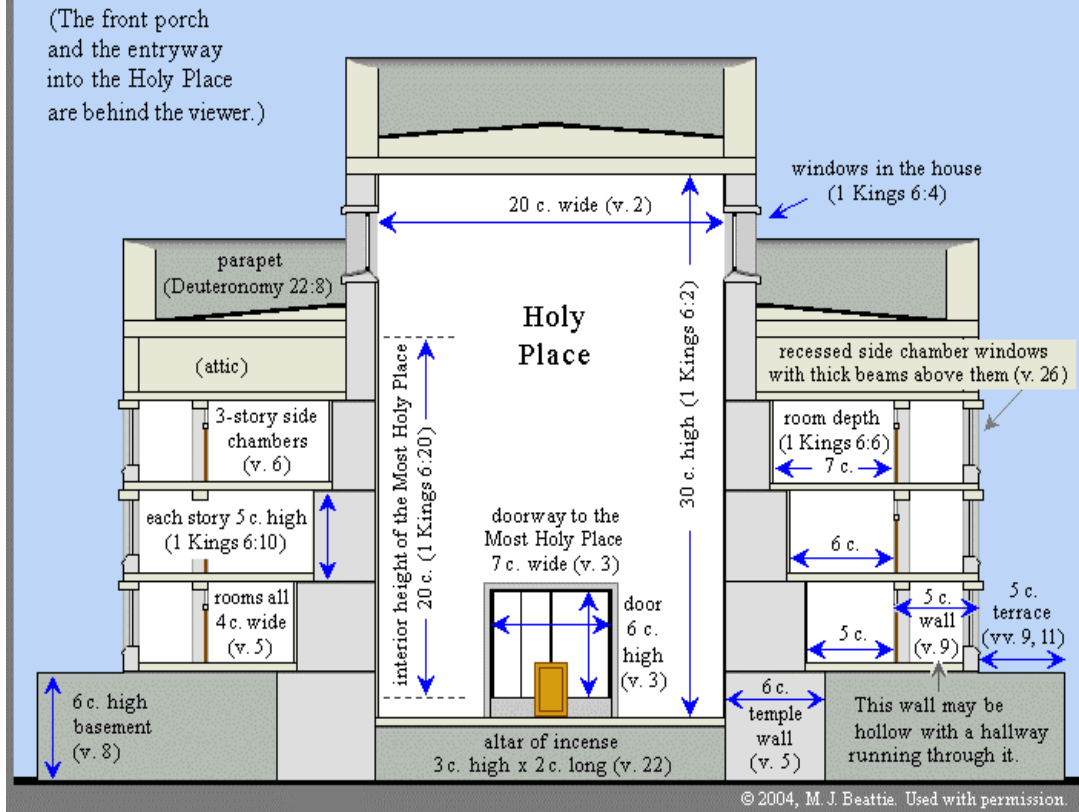
Ezekiel does not mention the ark. **Jeremiah 3:16-17** says: “Then it shall come to pass...that they will say no more, ‘The ark of the covenant of the LORD.’ It shall not come to mind, nor shall they remember it, nor shall they visit it, nor shall it be made anymore. At that time Jerusalem shall be called The Throne of the LORD, and all the nations shall be gathered to it, to the name of the LORD, to Jerusalem.” This could mean that there won't be an ark there at all. However, that seems somewhat odd given that there is a heavenly ark that would likely still be typified in the millennial temple (see **Revelation 11:19**).

The point of Jeremiah's statement may simply be that the actual bodily presence of God in the person of the glorified Jesus Christ will so overshadow the ark that this representative object will not even be thought of.

People will go to Jerusalem *not* to visit the mere resting place of the ark, but rather to see where the Almighty King sits enthroned in majesty. What is the ark itself compared to that awesome reality? (Interestingly, the statement that the ark will not be “made anymore” could even indicate that the original ark will be the one brought back and used—though the word rendered “made” can be variously translated, so the meaning is not entirely clear.)

God's Millennial Temple

Ezekiel 41: *Cut-away View of the Interior Structure*



Further details on the design and decor of the temple can be found in **1 Kings 6 (verses 2-4, 14-32)**. It can also be noted that most of the dimensions of the temple structure are twice that of the tabernacle (see **Exodus 26:15-30**). With this initial brief description of the temple sanctuary, Ezekiel moves beyond its 6-cubit-thick (12.6-foot) walls (**Ezekiel 41:5**), to the 90 side chambers that surround it. Combined with **1 Kings 6:5-6 and verse 10** we learn that each room is four cubits in width and five cubits tall, but five, six or seven cubits in length depending on which of the three stories the rooms were on, with the larger rooms on the top floor. (These chambers bolster the argument for a seven-palm cubit, which would make the smaller rooms 8.4 x 10.5 feet, with 10.5-foot stories. With a five-palm or 18-inch cubit, these rooms would only be 6 x 7.5 feet, with a rather short 7.5 feet between floors.)

The step-like construction of these chambers is described, with the explanation that the configuration allows each floor to be supported on the temple side using one-cubit ledges, rather than requiring fasteners penetrating into the temple wall itself (**Ezekiel 41:6-7; compare 1 Kings 6:6**). No mention is given here as to the purpose for these chambers, but other verses (for example, **1 Chronicles 9:27**) describe Levites lodging all around the house of God. These rooms do seem about the size of bedrooms, with the third floor chambers being large enough for double occupancy. (This would allow a total of 120 beds.)

We were earlier told that there were steps leading up to the temple (**Ezekiel 40:49**). The number is not given. **Ezekiel 41:8** describes a six-cubit elevation around the temple for the side chambers, but when all the various measurements are laid out, it

appears that this foundation does not extend underneath the temple itself. There is also a five-cubit-wide terrace along the outside of the side chambers, undoubtedly with a restraining rail of some sort for the safety of those using it (**Ezekiel 41:11**; see **Deuteronomy 22:8**). The 20-cubit-wide walkway (**Ezekiel 41:10**) appears to be the one on the ground level between the temple and the inner court buildings.

In **Ezekiel 41:12**, Ezekiel is shown one of these buildings—the very large structure on the western side of the inner courtyard. It is 70 x 90 cubits inside (nearly 28,000 square feet). Not much is said about it here, but in **1 Chronicles 26:12-18** a storehouse is mentioned, adjacent to a highway, which could only have been on the western side of the temple complex where there were no outer courts. Several other scriptures mention such a storehouse (see **1 Kings 7:51**; **Nehemiah 10:38**; **12:44**; **13:12-13**; **Malachi 3:10**) as a place for keeping tithes, offerings and firstfruits, as well as temple articles of gold and silver. Since most all of the other buildings are multiple stories, it is also quite likely that this building is similarly tall...

The remainder of the chapter contains details on the appearance of the temple. These include windows and wall decorations of palm trees and “cherubim,” creatures that in this case had two faces, as opposed to the four faces Ezekiel had seen many years earlier (see Ezekiel 1). There is also a description of the incense altar (**Ezekiel 41:22**), which was a cubit higher and wider than that of the tabernacle (see **Exodus 30:2**). Finally, we are given descriptions of the bi-fold doors to each of the two rooms of the temple. Further details are given in **1 Kings 6** about windows and wall decorations, although in some cases differences can be noted.

Ezekiel 42 describes buildings directly north and south of the Sanctuary in line with the north and south perimeters of the inner court that are three stories high. **The Bible Reading Program (Ezekiel 42)** has this to say about these buildings and what is outside the outer court when Ezekiel departs from the Temple:

Ezekiel now leaves the immediate temple area and...over to a 100 x 50 cubit, three-story building on the west side of the gate (**Ezekiel 42:1-3**). This building, and the corresponding one next to the inner south gate, are said to be dining chambers where the priests eat the holy offerings (**Ezekiel 42:13**). They have an interesting terraced construction, where each floor is narrower than the one below it (**Ezekiel 42:5-6**). The rooms on the ground floor are said to have a 10-cubit-wide indoor corridor in front of them (**Ezekiel 42:4**). The upper floors are each set back, to allow for rooftop patios (outdoor corridors) in front of the second- and third-floor rooms. The first- and second-floor rooms are the same size, but the third-floor rooms are smaller (**Ezekiel 42:5-6**).

At the end of this chapter, Ezekiel is taken through the outer east gate to measure the enclosed temple district. Notice these measurements are using the measuring rod of six cubits. So rather than being the 500 cubits per side of the temple complex, this is a 3,000-cubit-per-side “holy area” (**Ezekiel 42:20**). The word “cubits” in the NKJV is italicized in **Ezekiel 42:20**. The KJV translators correctly used “reeds,” as specifically stated in the previous verses. This is describing a walled area 1.2 miles square, probably of carefully landscaped parkland, with the temple complex in the middle of it. This gives a “buffer zone” of almost exactly one half mile between the outside walls of the temple complex and the walls around its grounds.

If this outer wall is also the one we saw in **Ezekiel 40:5**, then it is about 12 feet thick and 12 feet high. What purpose might this serve? The parkland surrounding the temple “city” could be more than just open space. It could serve as an area for tents or booths during the pilgrimage feasts, especially the Feast of Tabernacles. If so, this thick wall could house much needed bathroom facilities, or supply other indoor needs for the large numbers of visitors.

If this future Temple is also over the Gihon Spring then the SE spur would have to be enlarged quite considerably but there will undoubtedly be some major geographical changes that will occur in the Jerusalem area.

We are told that the Mount of Olives will be split in two at Christ's return where half of it will move north and half of it to the south. It is quite possible that this will bring the southern summit of the Mount of Olives where the Miphkad Altar was and Christ crucified into a position exactly due east of the Gihon Spring and the Temple rather than 10 degrees north of east.

Another major change in geography is the river that gradually starts at the Temple, quite possibly the Gihon Spring, and flow both towards the Mediterranean (which would be a new river) and towards the Dead Sea and healing the Dead Sea so all forms of life are found in and around it (**Zechariah 14:8, Ezekiel 47**).

In **Ezekiel 43** Ezekiel is then given a glimpse of the awesome arrival of Jesus Christ to this newly completed temple and He tells Ezekiel that He will dwell here with Israel forever. The use of the word forever where the soles of His feet will dwell (**Ezekiel 43:7**) indicates the future New Jerusalem will probably be an upgrade of this millennial Jerusalem that will come down to the earth as opposed to orbiting earth's atmosphere which to some is a possibility due to its enormous size.

An individual known as the prince is introduced in **Ezekiel 44. The Bible Reading Program (Ezekiel 44)** has this to say about him:

Ezekiel is taken back to the outer east gate and discovers that now it has been shut. Following Christ's arrival, no man will be allowed to use it (**Ezekiel 44:1-2**). However, one identified as the "prince"— ruler or leader—will be permitted to enter the eastern gate complex through its porch for eating certain ceremonial meals (**Ezekiel 44:3**). This person cannot be Jesus Christ, for we later discover that he must make a sin offering for himself (**Ezekiel 45:22**). Indeed, **Ezekiel 46:16-17** says the prince has natural children.

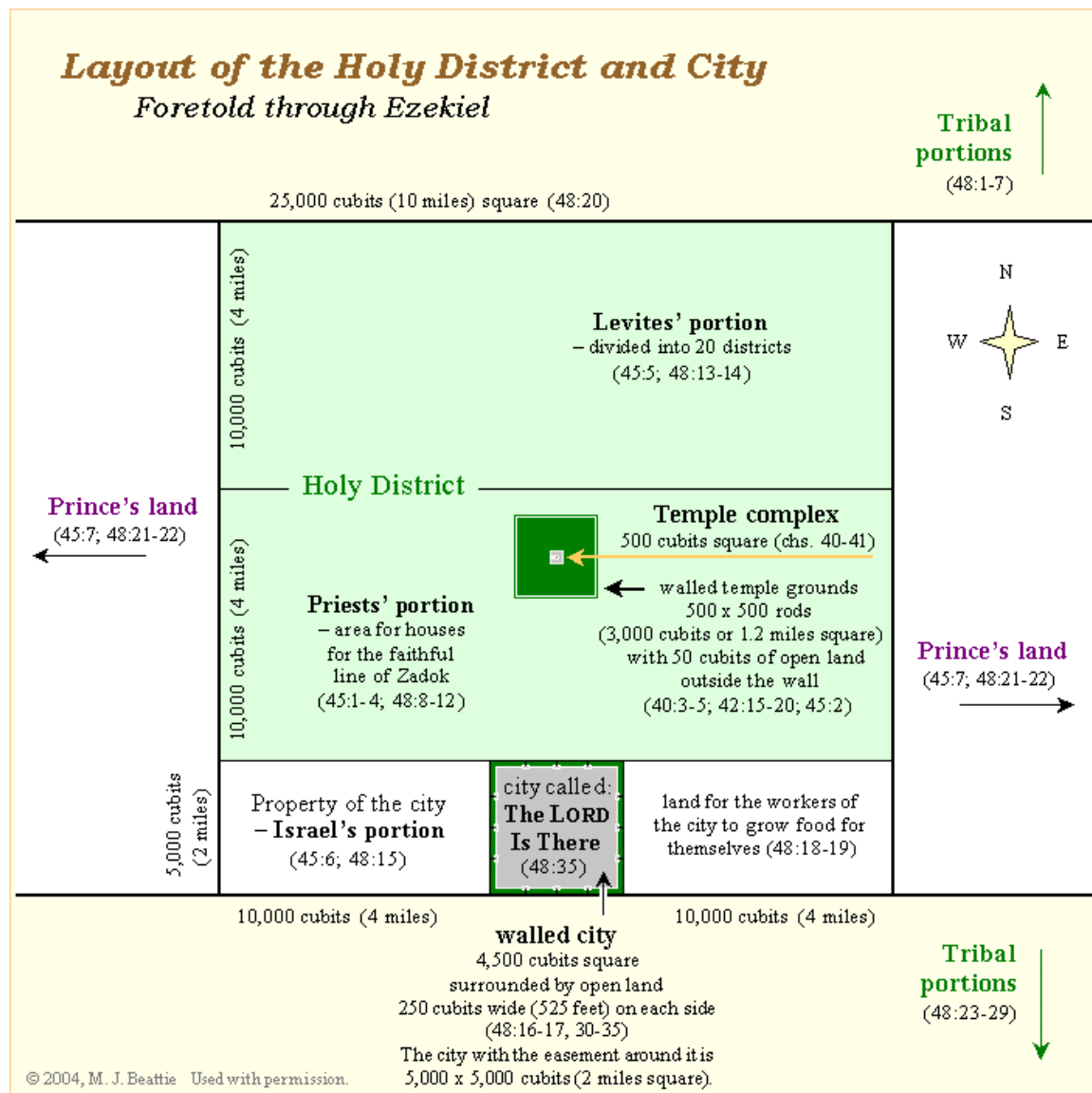
Some have argued that the prince is the resurrected King David, as he will be prince over Israel in the Millennium (**Ezekiel 34:23-24; 37:24**). Yet that doesn't fit either because David also would not need to offer a sin offering for himself. Nor would any of the glorified saints who will then no longer sin. So the prince here must be a human being who needs to repent of sin. From all that is written of the prince in **chapters 45–46**, it is evident that he is a civil leader, the highest human ruler of the day, probably of the house of David...

While we see many parallels between the past and the future, no description of a human *high* priest among the Zadokite priests is given—presumably because Jesus Christ alone will fulfill that role in perpetuity. It is, of course, possible that there will be a leading human figure among the priests

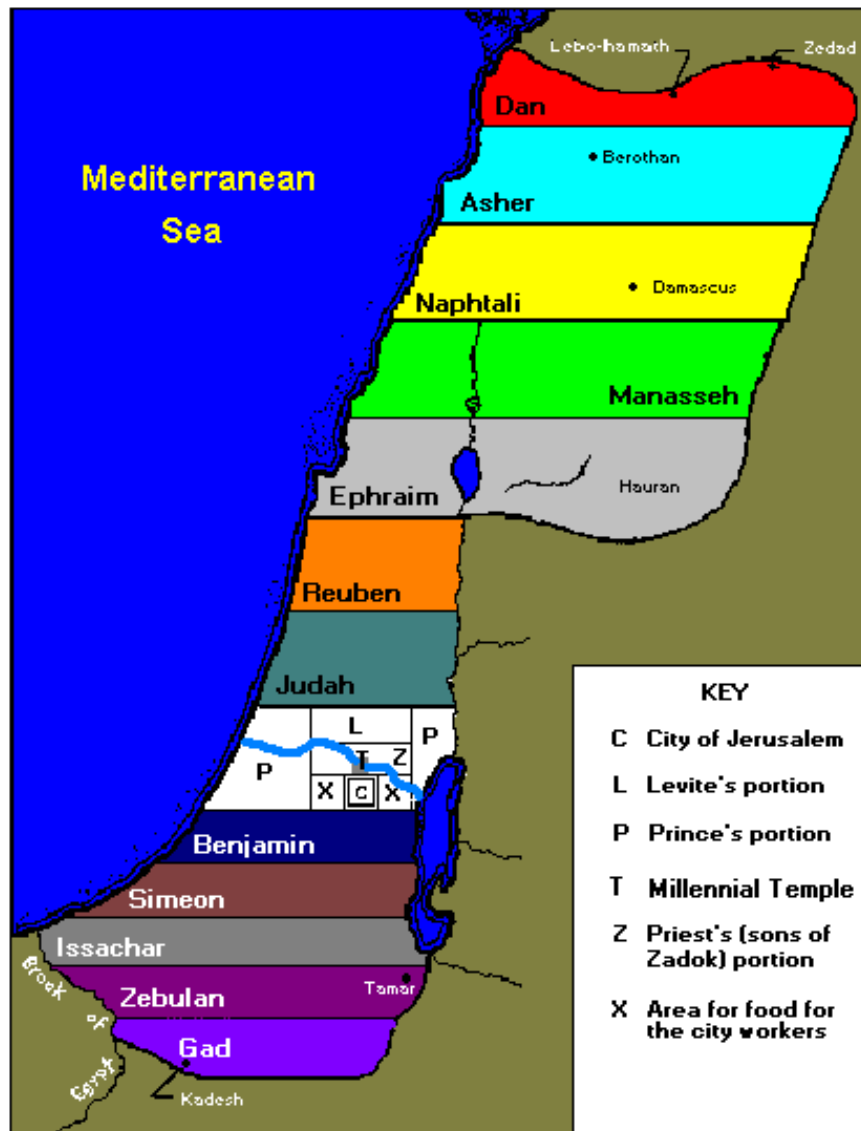
In Ezekiel 45 and 48 we are given details of the Holy District and the City. The Holy District is 25000 cubits wide. It is 20 000 cubits from north to south. The northern part belongs to the Levites and the southern part is for the priests and within the priests section is the Temple.

The Temple which is 550 cubits square (including surrounding parkland) is in the center of the priest's district going east to west but I feel it is probably at the southern end of the priests portion and adjacent to the walled city that is in the midst of the people's portion which includes the walled city.

The west part of Israel's portion for general use (on top of each tribes individual inheritance) is for the people and probably takes in the area of the SW hill. The area east of the walled city is for farming to produce food for the city workers. This area probably takes in the Kidron Valley and where the Mount of Offense is today which may be levelled. Outside on either side of the Holy District and Israel's portion is the Prince's portion.



LAND ALLOTMENT IN THE MILLENNIUM ACCORDING TO EZEKIEL



The Bible Reading Program (Ezekiel 47) makes these comments about the description of the river that proceeds from the very throne of God in the Temple as well as the details of the Millennial Jerusalem:

Ezekiel is now taken again to the door of the temple itself, and shown something that either he failed to notice or describe the first time he toured the inner court, or that was not there prior to Christ's arrival. The river of the water of life begins at the very throne of God in the Most Holy Place (**Ezekiel 44:7**). This parallels the description of the New Jerusalem (**Revelation 22:1**), which will still be in heaven during the Millennium, to descend to earth afterward. In both cases, there is evidently a literal river—but the river symbolizes the living waters of God's Holy Spirit.

In the millennial temple, the river emerges from beneath the eastern threshold, proceeding past the south side of the altar (also defined as the “right” side, as one faces east).

Ezekiel is then taken out the northern gates and around to the outer eastern gate, outside of the temple complex, to again see the river as it emerges on the south (right) side of the eastern gate. They move along the river to measure the depth of the water by wading across at 1,000-cubit intervals. By the time they reach 4,000 cubits (1.6 miles) from the eastern gate, the river is too deep to wade across.

Ezekiel mentions fruit-bearing and medicinal trees along the river (**Ezekiel 47:7, 12**), again similar to the description of the New Jerusalem, in which we see the tree of life bearing 12 different fruits and leaves with healing properties (**Revelation 22:2**). According to **Zechariah 14:8**, the river will split, part of it flowing west to the Mediterranean and the other part flowing east to the Dead Sea. Ezekiel goes on to describe the effect of this river on the Dead Sea, which will spring forth with life and become a wonderful place to go fishing.

Besides the literal application, there is a wonderfully symbolic picture in all this. Again, the river represents the outflowing of the Holy Spirit, bringing life to the lifeless. In the fruitful, medicinal trees we may see God's Spirit working in and through the lives of His righteous servants. For not only are the righteous to partake of the tree of life, they are in a sense to be trees of life themselves. Nourished by the stream of Holy Spirit, they are to produce godly fruit and be a life-giving blessing to others. A godly person who continually meditates on and lives according to God's law is “like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth its fruit in its season, whose leaf also shall not wither; and whatever he does shall prosper” (**Psalms 1:3**)...

The capital city occupies a 2 x 2-mile square in the center of the strip. The sides of the city proper are given as 4,500 cubits, surrounded by a 250-cubit easement (**Ezekiel 47:16-17**). This leaves two 2 x 4-mile stretches of land on either side of the city, described as the farmland for the workers of the city to grow their own food (**Ezekiel 47:18-19**). Inhabitants come from every tribe (**Ezekiel 47:19**).

Three gates are on each of the four sides of the city, each one named for a different tribe (this time Joseph only receiving one gate). The New Jerusalem, beyond the Millennium, will have gates of pearl, precious foundation stones bearing the names of the 12 apostles and streets of gold (**Revelation 21:21**). Perhaps some of these features will be incorporated in the millennial Jerusalem as well.

After the millennium and the Great White Throne Judgment period there Satan, his demons and the incorrigibly wicked will be cast into the Lake of Fire to be completely burned up. The location of the Lake of Fire is referred to as in the Greek as “gehenna” by Jesus in **Matthew 10:28** which is the Valley of Hinnom or Gehenna to the south of the City of David in Jerusalem. This was the rubbish dump as well as the scene of hideous deaths of innocent babies sacrificed to Baal. The wicked will have their turn to face the fires of gehenna if they do not repent.

The New Jerusalem

Following the millennium and the Great White Throne Judgment period God the Father will descend from heaven and dwell with mankind along with Jesus Christ. He will bring with Him the incredible New Jerusalem.

We are told in the Book of Revelation that the New Jerusalem is absolutely massive. It is 1500 miles by 1500 miles in area and soars to an enormous height of 1500 miles!

That is absolutely incredible. To give you some idea of how big an area that would cover that is a square area from Ankara, Turkey in the top left corner down through Cyprus and the Mediterranean Sea, Cairo, down through to the Sudan in the bottom left corner and then across the southern half of Arabia to the eastern side of the Persian Gulf and up through the eastern half of Iran.

That's an area that takes in the most of the Arabian Peninsula, Israel, Jordan, Syria, Iraq, much of Iran, southern Turkey, the Sinai and everything east of the Nile River. That is an incredible area!

Put another way, the New Jerusalem will literally be two thirds of the area of Australia and as big as all of the United States of America west of the Mississippi River!



And it's also a staggering 1500 miles high! That height would put its peak some five times higher than the standard orbit of the space shuttle which orbits in space about 300 miles above the earth!

The walls of the New Jerusalem will be 20 stories high! What does this great city look like? George Kackos makes the following comments about what the New Jerusalem will look like:

"It defies human imagination. Containing the glory of God and illuminated like a jasper stone, it glows in deep, rich, blue-green tones with the transparency of crystal. The walls have 12 gates, with the names of the tribes of Israel written upon them and 12 angels present. There are three gates in each of the four walls. The 12 foundations of the city wall contain the names of the 12 apostles (**Revelation 11:14**).

"The angel who measures the city gives its dimensions in terms of the reed (12 1/2 feet). The New Jerusalem is 1,500 miles in length, breadth and height (verse 16)!...[One] possibility is that the city is shaped like a pyramid, with God the Father and Christ appearing in the apex. The pyramidal structure is unique architecturally—the design may have originally come from God Himself. Other spirit beings may occupy areas at lower heights, depending on their status. Whatever the shape, New Jerusalem is a huge city. A spectacular example of God's handiwork is that the city is made of gold that appears as clear glass (**Revelation 21:18**).

"The walls encompassing New Jerusalem are 216 feet high (assuming a cubit measures 18 inches - that means the walls are about 20 stories high). Supporting the walls are an array of beautiful stones. Visiting a gem dealer would help you appreciate the beauty of the jasper [green], sapphire [blue], chalcedony green],

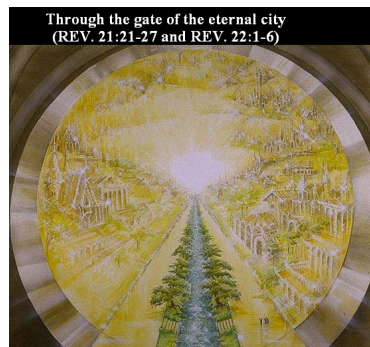
emerald [green], sardonyx [red & white], sardius [red], chrysolite [yellow], beryl [green], topaz [greenish gold], chrysoprase [green], jacinth [bluish purple] and amethyst [purple] that are used (**Revelation 21:17-20**).

"Though hard to imagine, each gate is made from a single pearl. That's quite a contrast to the small pearls we see today. A street is described as being made of pure gold having the transparency of glass (Good News, January 1981, article: 'After the Millennium - New Heavens and a New Earth')

In **Revelation 22:2** we read the about the river of life and the tree of life in the New Jerusalem:

In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, was **the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits**, each *tree* yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree *were* for the healing of the nations.

The tree of life here bears 12 different fruits and its leaves are for the healing of the nations. That people need healing after the New Jerusalem descends to earth after the Great White Throne Judgment period and the wicked have been cast into the lake of fire leads to the possibility that new humans will be created elsewhere when the earth becomes the new headquarters of the universe when God the Father dwells with mankind.



We are told that the names of the tribes of Israel, whether spiritual or physical, will be on the gates of the New Jerusalem. The names of the tribes given in **Revelation 7** are in an order that is utterly unique compared to where they are recorded elsewhere. Art Braidic has this to say about the order of the names in **Revelation 7**:

"The Almighty God inspired the names of the tribes of Israel in such a way that they tell a wonderful story of every true christian's struggle and ultimate triumph. Notice how a paragraph placing the meaning of these names in their order might read:

"I will praise the Lord (Judah) for He has looked on me (Reuben) and good fortune comes (Gad). Happy am I (Asher) because my wrestling (Naphtali) with God makes me forget (Manasseh) my trials. God hears me (Simeon) and has joined me (Levi) to Him. He has purchased me (Isaachar) and my Husband will dwell with me (Zebulon). God will add (Joseph) me to the Son of His right hand (Benjamin)."

In **Revelation 21:22** we read:

But I saw **NO TEMPLE** in it for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple.

While there are physical humans on earth in the millennium that still sin and need a reminder of how their sins separate them from God and the high cost of being reconciled through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ (pictured by the continuance of animal sacrifices for reminder purposes ONLY) God has decreed that there will be a physical Temple.

When we reach the culmination of Project Earth when all of the home planet's inhabitants are spirit beings in God's family or no more there is no longer a need to remind people of the separation that sin causes and no longer a need for a Temple that pictures the degrees of separation.

All mankind will be sinless in God's family and have direct contact to the great Creator and Ruler of Heaven and Earth and live in intimate contact with Him in Paradise.