

Torah Portion #7: Vayetze (ויצא) "and he went out"

Torah ~ Genesis 28:10-32:2 | Prophets ~ Hosea 12:12-14:10 | New Covenant ~ John 1:19-51

The Temple Location Controversy

Preface:

For those who consider this a sensitive subject, I agree. So, let me preface what we are about to study: The subject involves scripture, prophesy, archeology, eyewitness testimonies, and other evidence regarding the original location of the Temple of God in Jerusalem.

1. **Foremost - NO ONE knows for sure** the location of the Temple because that's the way the Lord wants it.
2. Our individual opinions on this subject have nothing to do with our salvation.
3. The Lord does not require us to agree on non-essential issues. We are a free people in Yeshua, who will have differences on many non-essential issues and that is OK...that is human. Praise God!
4. We are family, and God's family love each other regardless of minor differences. We are ONE in Yeshua!

Also, let me add, these days Palestinians have been making some claims that Israel has no right of ownership to the Temple Mount. Let me make it clear, today's message does not support "ANY" aspect of Palestinian demands that the Jewish people don't have a claim to the Temple Mount. There is no doubt in scripture that every square inch, of Jerusalem and Israel today (plus some) has been promised and given to the sons of Jacob...forever. Ahmen!

So, is this message going to be a waste of your time and should be talking about something more useful? No, because we are going to learn some great things along the way and when I finish I am praying that we will be blessed and better equipped to go out into the world and do more Yeshua for our neighbors than before. OK...Ahmen! ?

BTW: Ahmen...in Hebrew אמן Alef Melech Ne'eman (AMN) is an acronym for, "G-d, the Trustworthy King". The communicating of agreement between brothers along with a blessing for God, without actually speaking the word "God". Many Jews also speak today a common phrase, "Baruch HaShem" = "Bless his Holy Name", because they do not speak the name of God.

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TODAY'S TORAH READING

Gen 28:17-19 And [Jacob] was afraid, and said, How fearful is this place! This is nothing [less] but the house of God, and this is the gate of Heaven! ... 19) And he called the name of that place The House of God [Bethel]. But the name of that city was Luz at first.

Introduction: Keeping track of sites and locations is often difficult in scriptures. For example, Jacob thought Bethel was the place of God, and it was at that moment in time. But, God did not tell David & Solomon to build the Temple at Bethel or Luz, he said go to Mt Moriah and build it over Ornan's threshing floor in the city of David, Jerusalem (**2Ch 3:1**). This verse also says David prepared the threshing-floor of Ornan the Jebusite (*probably by terracing the site*) for Solomon's Temple.

In this study we will again talk about locations for the Temple of God. First, all proposed locations are on Mt. Moriah but at different specific places on the same mountain. As for controversy, there is no hotter issue in Israel today because this is where the Jewish people become physically and spiritually connected to history and prophesy. If the real Temple is not going to be rebuilt on the "Temple Mount" then we have an explosive game changer. So, what is this great mystery that some orthodox Jews only talk about in private with a chosen few? Consider the following:

No city in the world has ever been so defended, loved, coveted and fought over as Jerusalem. The Israel-Palestinian conflict is actually a Jewish-Muslim conflict between God and Satan. The reason is that for Satan to win over God he must drive the Jewish people into the sea or at least stop the building of the 3rd Temple.

The largest, most intensive and expensive archeology digs in the world today is the "City of David" dig, the ridge area south of the place called, Temple Mount. (Givati dig: \$9 million in last 5 years) This dig began many years ago, but was never as intense as it is today, with property and homes purchased and demolished, tunnels and pits dug under occupied dwellings and thousands of volunteers working in multiple dig sites. To some this is the most important archeology dig in the world.

Perhaps HaSatan created deception and confusion for the purpose of bringing war against those he hates the most...the Jewish people. There are many stories both Biblical and historical that prove God did not want the Jews to rebuild the Temple until it was time to fulfill prophesy.

God commanded us to, "Pray for the peace of Jerusalem," **Psa 122:6-9.** Jerusalem (yer-oo-shaw-lah'-im) is made up from word (shaw-lome) for Peace and (yaw-raw) for to flow as water + to shoot as an arrow + to teach, instruct. A name packed with meaning from the hand of God. To pray for the peace (shalom) of Jerusalem is to pray for peace, love,

prosperity, for all who live there because... *“of the house of the Lord our God, I will seek your good.”* It is not important that we know where, it is only important to be certain that the scriptures are true and His prophecies will be fulfilled. Ahmen!

Thesis: The current understanding of most people is the “Temple Mount” precinct is the area upon which the Temple once stood, but some claim the Temple was never there and the real location was south of and lower than the Dome of the Rock mount.

- I. The actual “Temple Mount” or Temple Precinct of God, (in greek “the hee-er-on,”) was totally dismantled stone by stone to its foundation and it no longer exists, exactly as the scriptures foretold.
 - A. The “Temple Mount” walls have over 5000 Herodian Stones that have never been dismantled. Most ignore claims that the prophecy requires all Temple precinct stone walls be demolished. The stone “Temple Mount” perimeter wall structure we see today is also known as the Haram Esh-Sharif (or just the “Haram”) an Arab name for the perimeter platform walls around the Dome of the Rock and the El Aksa Mosque area). Defenders of the so-called Temple Mount site claim, “prophecy was referring only to the Holy of Holies Temple, building (in geek “Naos”). They claim it does not apply to the whole site or to Temple Mount walls.” Despite the claim by one critic that, “There are some dig sites where fragments of Herod stone foundations are still in-place.” However, no place has any Herodian stones been found standing above ground other than the walls of the Haram Temple Mount.
 - B. **Eleazar Bin Jari**, commander of Masada wrote during the siege in 72 AD that, “Jerusalem was totally demolished including the foundations, and only the monument of Rome remained where the Roman Army continued to dwell.”...meaning Fort Antonia. Plus, the fort was needed to house the 5th Legion before and 10th Legion after the Jewish war ended in 70 AD. All indications of Jerusalem’s existence was totally erased.



- a. **Micah 3:12** prophesied, *“Zion (City of David) shall be plowed like a field and Jerusalem shall become a heap of stones.”* This is a reference to all of Jerusalem including the Temple Mount...no exceptions.
- b. **Mark 13:1-2**, *Yeshua & disciples went out of the temple, “hee-er-on”* (Meaning more than just the “Naos” building). *Yeshua and his disciples went out of the Temple grounds and looked back at the whole complex, at “These (tow'-taheese) great buildings”* a plural form for many buildings.
- c. **Matt 24:1-3** *“Yeshua went out from the temple (hee-er-on)...and they looked at the buildings of the temple (hee-er-on)”*. Verse 3 adds they sat on the Mount of Olives, meaning they came out of the East Gate of the temple precinct so they may have been looking at one of the tallest structural walls in the world (more on this later). Considering the context, there is no way his disciples would not have understood the word “heiron” meant all the amazing precinct walls.

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- d. **Josephus** (War VI.1,1. & VII.1,1.) “Jerusalem was so thoroughly laid even with the ground, that there was nothing left for visitors to believe it had ever been inhabited.” Josephus was not blind or lying. He was talking to Romans who understood, Fort Antonia was Roman not Jewish land.
- e. **Luk 19:41-44...** “and (they) shall lay you down even with the ground” (ed-af-id’-zo, means to raze every stone specifically the base stones)... “and not leave one stone upon another.” Note, verse 37 indicates Yeshua was descending the Mt of Olives, looking at the City of Jerusalem, and at the hundreds of stone houses, with retaining walls, stepping up the east hillside of the City of David as well as the gigantic base wall stones of Herod’s Temple complex, and verse 40 Yeshua says, “...if these (‘crying blessed is he who is coming in the name of the Lord’) should hold their peace the stones would immediately cry out.”



Today we are waiting on Jerusalem to cry out these words again. **(Mat 23:39).** Until they do, the razed stones of the City of David and the Temple, now scattered around Jerusalem, and the still standing stones around the Temple Mount, are ready to cry out again with the same message. They are trying to tell us “the third temple is coming, Yeshua is alive & coming, come now and know him and know HaMessiach before it is too late.”

Maybe this the reason we have this controversy today... so that we would talk about it, so that gentile and Jews will talk about it, hearts will stir and the veil of the Jews might come down. Ahmen!

- II. The existing walls with Herodian stones supporting the Haram around the Dome of the Rock are not part of Solomon’s Temple. They may be the defensive walls of Solomon’s Fortress Antonia.
- A. The existing great stone wall structure including the highly-revered Western Wall was constructed by Herod in first century AD to curry favor and show allegiance to Roman authority. It was an area designed and created to be official “Roman space”. Hundreds of Roman forts and camps around the Roman Empire were constructed according to the standard military design . The following validates this statement:
- a. **Josephus** said, “Fort Antonia was constructed to serve 6,000 soldiers and possibly an additional 4,000 support personnel for a total of 10,000 persons, a small city within an area of 36 acres (typically it included soldier’s housing [and/or tent areas], palace, training yards/courts, military administration building, a temple for Jupiter [goddess of war], and more.)

The Temple Location Controversy



Martin's reconstruction drawing of Fort Antonia built by Herod the Great

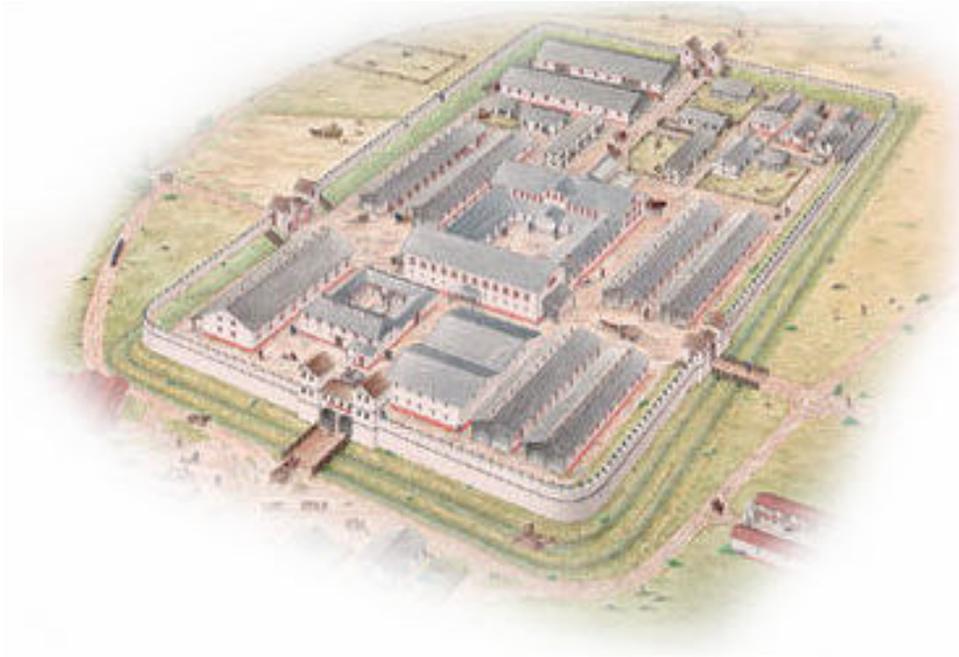
- b. **Michael Avi-Yonah** who created a scale model of old Jerusalem in 1973 showed a small Fort Antonia that would have served no more than 480 soldiers. Avi-Yonah chose to ignore much of what Josephus reported. This is also contrary to Acts 23:23 where 470 men were assigned to take Paul to Caesarea. To send out 470 soldiers to escort Paul and still protect Jerusalem would require several more thousand to remain in Jerusalem and a fortress large enough to house and support the Roman 5th Legion. Unlike most cities conquered by Rome, Jerusalem was the most troublesome city in the Empire, both then and still today.



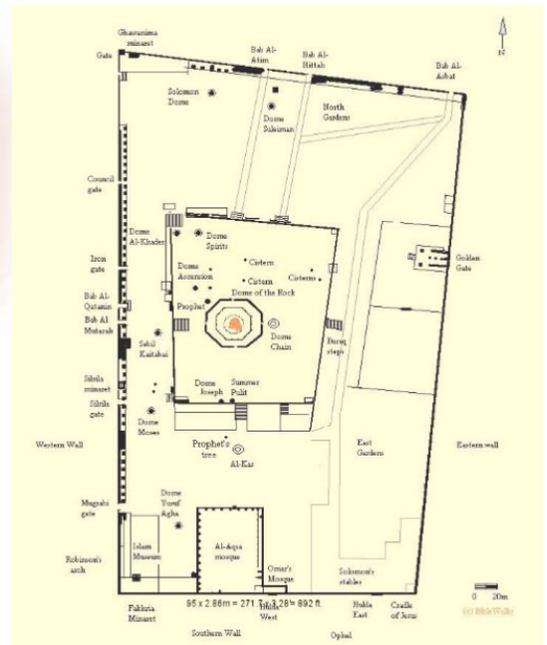
←--← Avi-Yonah called this small complex Fort Antonia.

- c. **Josephus** (*Antiquities* XV.11,3.) said "Fortress Antonia was a 36 acre trapezoid with dimensions of 929' on south, 1041' on north, 1556' on east, and 1596' on west. Just like the Haram this site is very similar to many other Roman forts and camps having 5 thousand soldiers."

The Temple Location Controversy



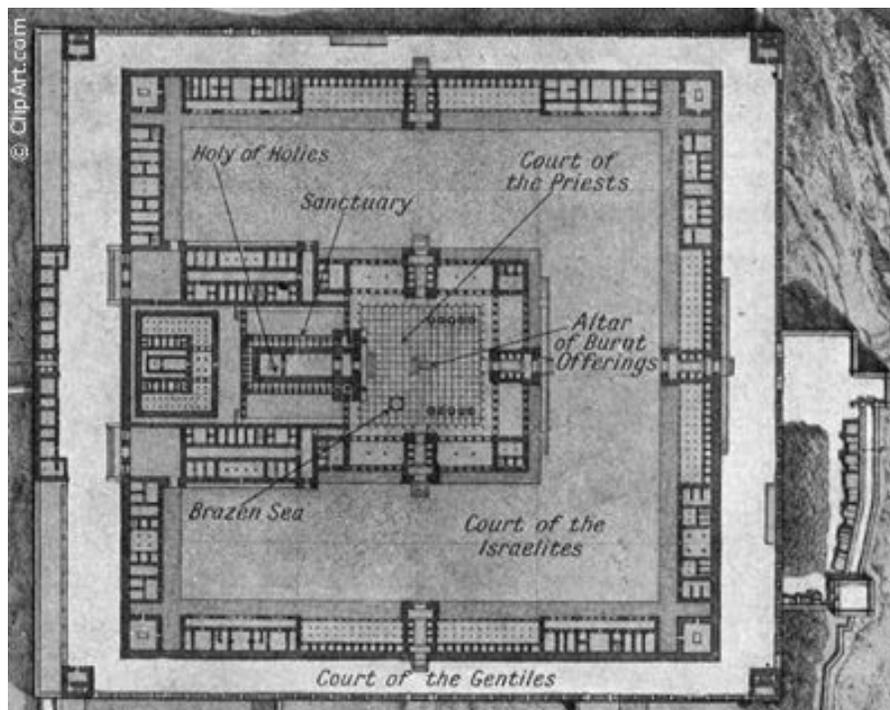
Typical Roman fort (smaller version), in Saalburg, Germany, which housed 1500 soldiers.



Temple Mt. (in 691 AD with Dome of Rock), some say site was formerly the Fortress Antonia

III. The first temple was build by Solomon and the second temple was rebuilt by Herod the Great at approximately the same location. Between first and second Temple, most do not realize some very important events took place during the non-Biblical era that changed much of what we understand.

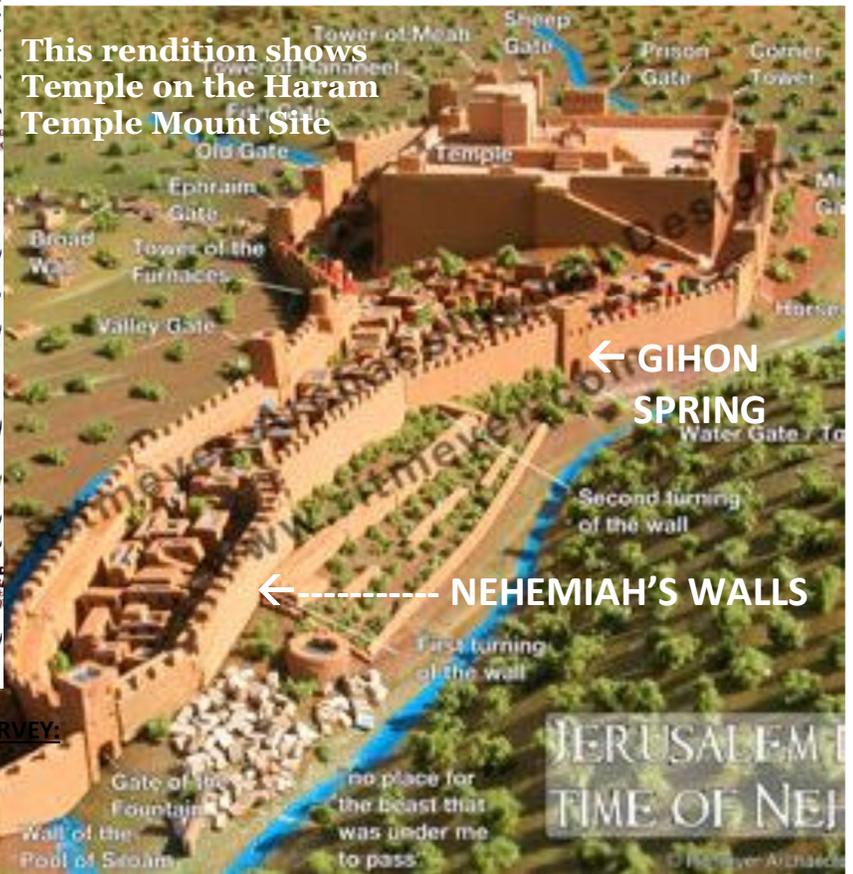
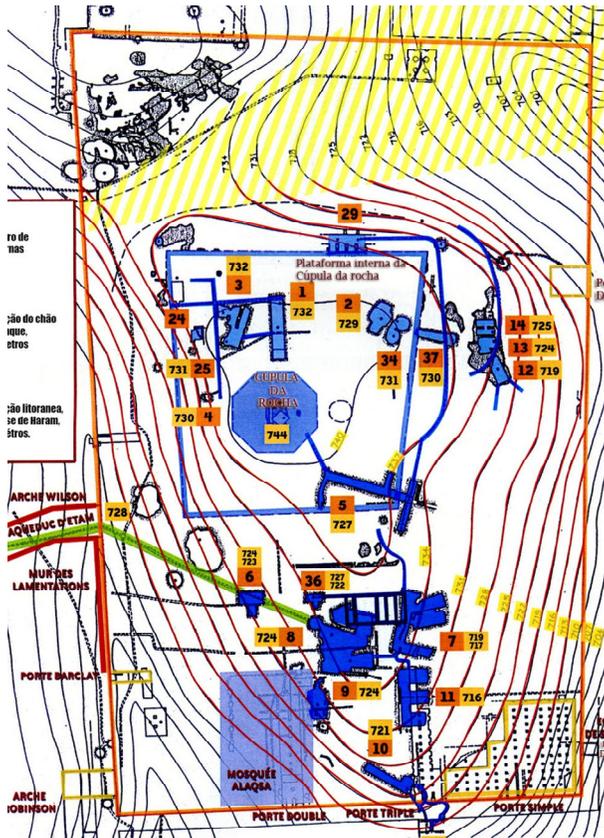
- A. Solomon's Temple of 970 BC was destroyed in 586 by Babylonians (**Zec 8:3,8**) then rebuilt by Nehemiah in 520 BC (see **Ezra 3:8-13**, and Hecateus, *Contra Apion*, I.22). Not a problem, but by knowing where Solomon's Temple was built we can be certain as to where Herod's Temple was built.
- B. Desecration of the Temple by Antiochus Epiphanes 215 BC & Revolt ending in 160 (I Maccabees 1:31-33)
- C. Simon the Hasmonean, began the cleansing of the Temple in 142 by de-struction of the Akra (Citadel) down to below bedrock and the Temple Mount down to the Threshing Floor bedrock. (Josephus, *Antiquities* XIII.6,7 pp 215-18 Loeb translation). The big problem is now by nature of Simeon's deep destruction all our archeological evidence from pre Hasmonean to Solomon is gone.



Detail of a Map of Solomon's Temple, circa 1000 BCE

D. However, extensive written historical documents have been left by Josephus, Nehemiah, Eusebius, Macabees, and others show where the Temple was located or they add evidence to it's site.

- a. Eusebius speaks about the history reported by Aristeas, (*Letters of Aristeas, ch. 38*) a gentile from Egypt who visited the restored Temple of Solomon over 100 years before Simon the Hasmonean, in 3rd century BC. He reported, "There is an inexhaustible reservoir of water, as would be expected from an abundant spring gushing up naturally from within the Temple." This is a clear reference to the spring of Gihon, the only spring within 5 miles of Jerusalem.
- b. Aristeas was also shown other water sources from rain storage cisterns located uphill from the Temple connected with underground pipe. See archeological survey drawings of cistern locations.



UNDERGROUND ARCH

Dark blue = rock cut Cistern Locations.
Green = Solomon's Aquaduct – to supplement water during times of dry spring

ECOLOGICAL SURVEY:

- c. The Roman, Tacitus, (*History Bk.5 para 12*) wrote about the spring water in Herod the Great's Temple on his visit in mid first century AD. "The temple resembled a citadel, and had its own walls, which were more laboriously constructed than others (being the walls of the upper fortress Antonia 600 ft. to the north). The colonnades with which it was surrounded formed an admirable outwork. It contained an inexhaustible spring; and there were also subterranean excavations in the hill (meaning the hill under the upper fortress of Antonia), with tanks and cisterns for holding rainwater." **All Gihon Spring evidence proves the Temple had to have been in the Northern area of the City of David above the spring which rules out all Haram/Temple Mount options.**
- d. According to Josephus the Southeast corner of the temple was 400 to 450 ft. high and began in the lowest area in the center of the Kedron valley. The Haram cannot meet this test, even after removing the depth of existing debris, the SE corner of the Haram is high on the upper slope of the mount and could never reach the center of the Kedron valley even after removing the debris.
- e. Herod the Great began his Temple & Fortress renovation work in 37 BC by raising the platforms and expanding the old Hasmonean walls. The south fortress wall had a dimension of 929', the east 1556',

the north 1041', the west 1596'. The two North-South walls diverge as they approach the north boundary. The north citadel built by the Hasmoeans was called the "Baris". Herod build a new one of 36 acres, almost twice as large as the old one underneath and named it Fortress Antonia. The description of Fortress Antonia has two errors that indicate it cannot possibly be the real Temple Mount. First, the Temple Mount as we know it is called by the Mishnah the "Camp of the Levites". This is the area with walls around we referred to as 600' x 600' square. **The fortress does not have square sides (90 degree corners) as shown in Eze Chapter 48, and the Mishnah, Middoth II.1.** The new Temple Mount will be 600' x 600'. **The perfect square requirement for the Temple which negates the Haram/Temple Mount from being considered the real Temple Mount.** (Eze chapter 48, the ideal Temple) and corrected the Temple House dimensions to better match the Biblical standards. The Temple remained in the City of David close to Solomon's site, but the fortress walls were now 600 FT north of the Temple Mount.

- f. Josephus writes in "*Antiquities XV.11,3*", and "*War V.5,1, Loeb translation*", where he describes the amazing southeast wall corner. The foundation of the turning of the wall was constructed in the floor of the Kidron valley. The final wall that stood on this foundation was 300 cubits high, or 450 ft. This work was associated with both Solomon and Herod and the Septuagint Version of Sirach, credits Simon the Hasmonean with additional extension of the walls of the Temple. In "*War V.5,1, Loeb translation*", Josephus says, "Solomon made that Temple which was beyond this a wonderful one indeed, and such as exceeds all description in words...is hardly believed upon sight...you could not without pain bend down to see (the depth)...of the elevated ground 400 cubits (600 feet)...on which the Temple was built." **This amazing wall and the Temple of Herod was located approximately 1200 feet south of the so called "Temple Mount" which therefore must have been the Fortress of Antonia.**

V. It is hard to understand how such a big mistake could have been made, but here are some reasons:

- A. After 70 AD historical facts and identifiable places became difficult to locate. Without any Jews in Jerusalem to care for and record, and hundreds of years before any continuous Jewish occupancy again existed in Jerusalem, landmarks and places of history became confused and mixed with folklore.
- B. No durable known structures to serve as "proven" standing stones for the Temple from 70 AD
- C. For hundreds of years some rumors were passed down long enough for them to become facts in the minds of those who wanted to believe them. Here are a few historical reports to explain how the walls of the Haram could have gotten confused with the place of the Temple.
- a. Charles Wilson & Charles Warren, 1864 AD, archeologist identified stone walls under the Haram that they reported to be Hasmonean, implying they were early Temple walls, since everyone wants to believe famous "archeologist" would never make a mistake about the stones functions. In this case more evidence is require to know the stones are Temple instead of Citadel.
 - b. The destruction of the citadel (Akra) and the Temple (Ophel) sites by Simeon the Hasmonean was followed by the double use of location names. This created much confusion, such as the Western Hill assumed the name of "Upper City", the City of David below the Temple Mount took the name "Lower city", the Ophel being moved north and the Akra being moved farther north, the term "Temple Mount" and "Western Wall" being moved north and almost totally accepted by the Jewish community.
 - c. Jews held the western wall as no consequence until 1570. Prior to that they preferred to pray on the Mount of Olives or in the Kedron Valley.
 - d. The earliest known claim that the Temple was under the Dome of the Rock was 12th Century Rabbi Trudella....1100 years after the destruction of the Temple. After this those who believed the Temple was south of the "Temple Mount" became fewer and fewer.
 - e. The Christian belief in the story that the Jesus trial before Pillate happened at the small fort like structure north of the Temple Mount has only in the last hundred years become better understood by archeologist and the public as totally without merit.
 - f. The claim that the pinnacle rock under the Dome of the Rock was the "Thrashing Floor" of scripture is not validated by archeology or history. It was possibly the stone of the Praetorium (see below).
 - g. The Jerusalem scale models designed and built by Michael Avi-Yonah in 1973 perpetuated the misunderstanding and assured the world of the "certainty" of his design.
 - h. Anyone today who speaks for any other Temple site is ridiculed by Christians and Jews alike.
 - i. There are some who believe the Temple was south of the "Temple Mount" but prefer that others do not know the truth. Perhaps the reasons are first, if the world continues to point elsewhere means less attention will be pointed at the archeological digs, and this makes possible the start of construction on the Last Temple on its original site to the south in the near future.
- D. Most people today think the Dome of the Rock was located over the same rock as the Temple, which was the thrashing floor owned by Ornan, the Jebusite on Mt. Moriah (**2 Chr 3:1 and 2 Chr 21.**)

However, evidence suggests the rock under the Dome is one we know of as the Praetorium or “the Pavement-Stone” in **John 19:13**. “When Pilate therefore heard these words, he brought Jesus out, and sat down on the judgment seat at a place called The Pavement, but in Hebrew, Gabbatha.” This was the place Pilate sentenced Jesus to be crucified. A stone was reported to have been surrounded by paving and covered with mosaic flagstones as pavement.

Conclusion:

In the end, the main thing concerning what we believe about the Temple Mount is of little consequence. Where it was located and where the Final Temple will be built has nothing to do with our salvation or our mission to “Love the Lord our God with all our hearts and love our neighbors as ourselves, in the name of Yeshua”.

However, there are two more possibilities for the Temple of God. It may be built someday according to prophesy, but it will be no different than the one standing between 30AD and 70AD, where the red chord never turned to white. It was no longer a place for salvation because our salvation will forever come only through Yeshua. But, there is one more consideration, the Temple of the Living Stones.

- *John 2:19 Jesus answered and said to them, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.”*
- *1 Pet 2:5 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.*
- *Eph 2:19 Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, 20 having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, 21 in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, 22 in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.*

Now with this in mind: Turn to Rev 11:3-13 *I will give my two witnesses who wear sackcloth the authority to prophesy for 1,260 days.” These witnesses are the two olive trees and the two lamp stands standing in the presence of the Lord of the earth. And if anyone should want to hurt them, fire comes out of their mouths and burns up their enemies. If anyone wants to hurt them, he must be killed in this manner. These witnesses have authority to close the heavens to keep rain from falling while they are prophesying. They also have authority to turn bodies of water into blood and to strike the earth with any plague, as often as they desire. When they have finished their testimony, the beast that comes up from the bottomless pit will wage war against them, conquer them, and kill them. Their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city that is spiritually called Sodom and Egypt, where their Lord was crucified. For three and a half days some members of the peoples, tribes, languages, and nations will look at their dead bodies and will not allow them to be placed in a tomb. Those living on earth will gloat over them, celebrate, and send gifts to each other, because these two prophets had tormented those living on earth. But after the three and a half days, the breath of life from God entered them, and they stood on their feet. Those who watched them were terrified. Then the witnesses heard a loud voice from heaven calling to them, “Come up here!” So they went up to heaven in a cloud, and their enemies watched them.*

Some have interpreted these verses concerning the “living stones” and the “two witnesses” to be related to the Abomination of Desolation. Dan 9:27 where the Antichrist makes a 7 year treaty with the people and the apostate church. Perhaps a Temple of stone will for 3 ½ years represent and/or coincides with the real Temple of JHVH, built with Living Stones in the name of Yeshua.

- The two witnesses in Rev 11 are a great assembly of Jewish Disciples of Yeshua and a great assembly of Gentile Disciples of Jesus. These two brothers of the Kingdom yet one in Yeshua, are murdered then lay 3 ½ days, cold as stone, just as the Messiah lay 3 days in the grave, as a “desolation of abomination” to God. As if, as a sacrifice by the Antichrist to HaSatan.
- Just as these Two Witnesses are resurrected, “Called Up” after 3 ½ days into the clouds, the Antichrist stops the 3 ½ years of sacrifices being offered up in the Temple of cold stones and begins 3 ½ years of the great persecution unto the end.

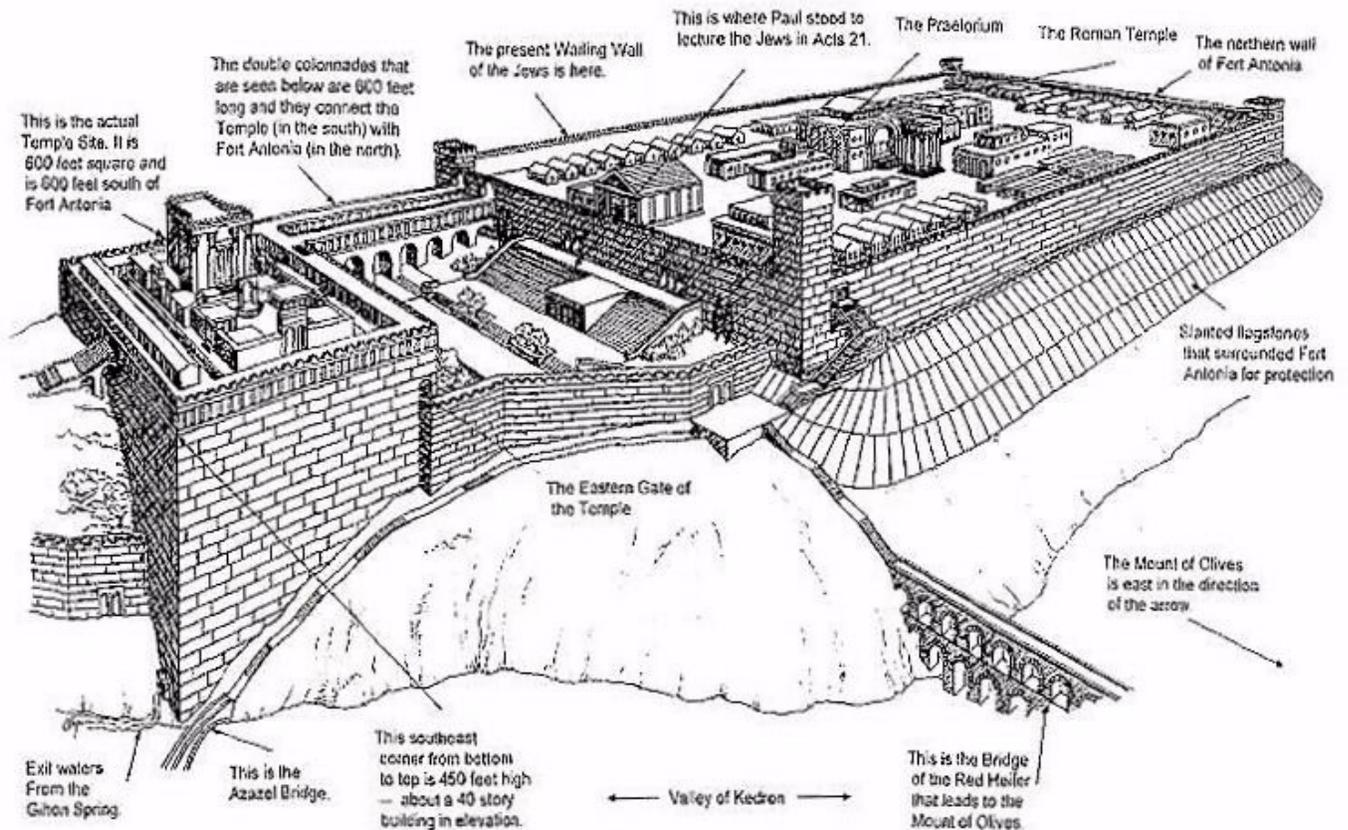
2 Co 3:3 *...we are disciples of Yeshua...not written in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart.* We must tear out our heart of stone and ask the Lord to give us a new heart of flesh. In fact, the location of the temple is nothing compared to the location of our hearts. Have we given our hearts to the Lord? If so we have only to cry out to him and He will be there.

Of course, it is wonderful to go to historic places because it can be emotionally meaningful: This helps us remove our minds from the distractions in world around us, and helps us focus our thoughts on the Lord...because a relationship with Yeshua is the most important “need” we have and that we must have. We must have a heart need, because the Spirit of God requires a right heart of flesh and blood in order to focus on our God. In return his gift of the Holy Spirit brings us even closer and we become one mind locked on Yeshua.

- Sacred objects, ancient artifacts, and Jerusalem stones mean NOTHING in comparison to our relationship to the Lord. If we truly want to know God, we must know Yeshua.
- We enter not through gates of stone, we must enter through the door that is Yeshua. We enter through the doorway by HIS blood and enter the Glory that is the Lord.

Halleluyah and Ahmen!!

**A Prospect of the Temple and Fort Antonia from the Mount of Offense
(looking northwestward)**
[If one will read the eyewitness accounts of Josephus, without preconceived ideas, the Temple and Fort Antonia appear precisely as they are drawn below.]



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