

The Good Word

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LOCATION OF & DESTRUCTION OF THE TEMPLE

by Dr. Seraphim Steger

For those who have been to Jerusalem and traveled the road from Bethany and gazed upon the Old City (like Jesus on Palm Sunday) as the the road descends the Mount of Olives toward the Kidron Valley, what do we see? Gravestones by the thousands--some 3,000 years old. Those buried there wanted to be the first to meet their Messiah, believing that when He comes, it will be to the Mount of Olives. Much could be said about these stones, but it is a different group of stones that I would like to focus on--the stones of the Temple.



THE DOME OF THE ROCK MOSQUE WITHIN THE TEMPLE COURTYARD AS VIEWED FROM A JEWISH GRAVEYARD ON THE MOUNT OF OLIVES.

On that Palm Sunday as Jesus continued down that same road to Jerusalem *He saw the city and wept over it, saying, "If thou knewest, even thou, and at least in this thy day, the things for thy peace! But now it is hidden from thine eyes. For the days shall come upon thee that **thine enemies shall put a rampart around thee**, and encompass thee and contain thee on every side, and dash to the ground thee and thy children within, and **they shall not leave in thee a stone upon a stone**, because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation (Luke 19:41-44, KJV)."*

On one of the days that quickly followed in that week before the Passover, as He was teaching in the Temple across from the treasury,...*some spoke about the Temple, that it had been adorned with goodly stones and votive offerings, He said, "As for these things which ye behold, **the days will come in which not a stone shall be left upon a stone, which shall not be put down** (Luke 21:5-6)."* And similarly after watching rich and poor casting their alms into the treasury: *And as He went forth out of the Temple, one of His disciples saith to Him, "Teacher, see what manner of stones and what manner of buildings!" And Jesus answered and said to him, "Seest thou these great buildings? **By no means shall a stone be left upon a stone which surely shall not be put down**" (Mark 13:1-3). And having gone out, Jesus was going from the temple, and His disciples came to Him to show Him the buildings of the Temple. 2 But Jesus said to them, "See ye not all these things? Verily I say to you, **in no wise shall there be left here a stone upon stone which shall not be put down**" (Matt 24:1-2).*

Here we see 4 passages in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke where Jesus prophesied about the future destruction of Jerusalem. In Luke 19:41-44 He prophesied about the city being surrounded by a rampart on all sides and all Jerusalem would be destroyed such that not one stone would be left upon another stone. The other passages focus on the buildings of the Temple which our Lord Jesus said would be be totally destroyed as well with not one stone left upon another--that will not be put down.

Does it not seem strange then, when one tours the Old City of Jerusalem today and visits the the Jewish Quarter, that one finds a very large and ancient wall, the Western/Wailing Wall, popularly believed by today's Jews to have been part of the Temple complex --either the western wall of the Temple itself or the supporting wall for its platform? Notably, the first seven visible courses of the wall are built with enormous limestone blocks each bearing King Herod's signature chiseled edges. There are 17 more courses of Herodian stone underground in the foundation. Surprisingly, this wall



WESTERN WALL WITH 7 LOWER COURSES OF HERODIAN STONE.



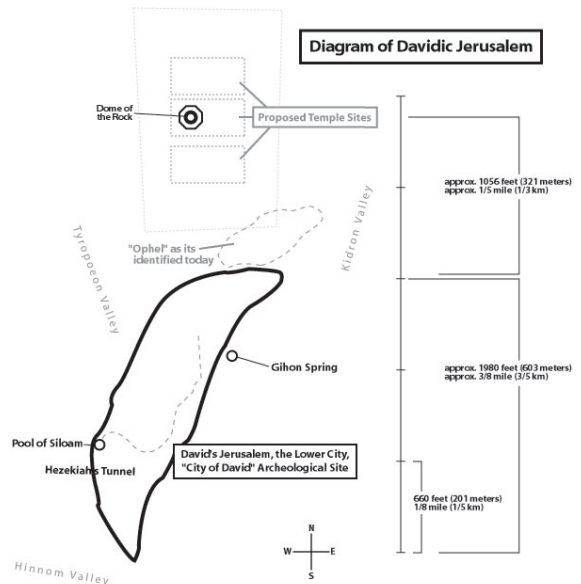
THE LARGE MELEKE LIMESTONES SHOWING KING HEROD'S SIGNATURE RECESSED CHISELED BORDERS.

stretches for nearly 1600 feet, i.e., much longer than the dimensions given for the Temple platform by either Flavius Josephus (600 feet) or the *Mishnah* (750 feet).

Consequently, we have a dilemma here since Jesus prophesied that the city of Jerusalem and the Temple would be destroyed, that not one stone would be left on top of another. Yet, here is a wall with 24 courses of Herodian era stone that stretches for 1600 feet. So was Jesus wrong, and this wall truly part of Jerusalem and/or the Temple? Were the Gospel writers lying or grossly exaggerating here? *May it not be! But let God be true and every man a liar* (Rom. 3:4). Or are many of today's Jews and modern scholars wrong about this wall being part of the the Temple or part of Jewish Jerusalem in Herodian Temple times? Indeed they are wrong! Consequently, it is the purpose of this article to show that this wall is not part of the Temple of Herod, nor any part of Jewish Jerusalem of the 1st century AD.

Most of us know that Jerusalem was captured by the Roman army under Titus in AD 70--but that was only after a brutal seven month siege. The Temple was finally taken on the 9th of Av (*Tisha B'Av*), 62 days after Pentecost. It was then set ablaze and totally destroyed. Titus ordered all the walls and buildings of Jerusalem to be torn down except for one western wall and 3 towers. So, this Herodian era "Western Wall" and the 3 towers are the only structures known to have survived the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus. But where was the Temple and what were these structures?

THE ORIGINAL LOCATION OF THE TEMPLE



MAP OF JERUSALEM¹ SHOWING THE CRESCENT-SHAPED SOUTHEASTERN RIDGE, GIHON SPRING, HEZEKIAH'S TUNNEL, AND THE POOL OF SILOAM. THE "TEMPLE MOUNT" IS SOME 600 FEET NORTH, AND THE DOME OF THE ROCK 1000 FEET NORTH OF THIS CRESCENT-SHAPED RIDGE.

There is only one geographical feature that anchors the location of the Temple to a specific site, and that is the Spring of Gihon,² the only naturally occurring water source for Jerusalem. In Temple times the Spring of Gihon gushed forth flows of water up to five times per day in the wet seasons, and once a day in dry seasons.³ King Hezekiah built an additional water

1. Brian K. McPherson and Scott McPherson, "Post-Destruction Accounts Regarding the Site of the Temple," http://www.biblestudying.net/temple_schematics6.html Many maps here!
2. Gihon in Hebrew means *gushing, bursting forth*
3. Dr. Ernest L. Martin, "New Evidence for the Site of the Temple in Jerusalem", <http://askelm.com/temple/t001211.htm>

tunnel to allow a part of the waters from the Spring of Gihon to flow into the pool of Siloam within the city walls. That spring with its cave, water courses, tunnel, and the pool of Siloam are well known and confirmed historical sites in Jerusalem.⁴ They lay within the mountains of Moriah⁵ which included from north to south the current “Temple Mount” and the crescent shaped southeastern ridge which contained the summits of Ophel and Zion as well as the city of David. The Spring of Gihon gushed up onto the Ophel summit and also flowed out from under the Ophel summit to the east into the Kidron Valley then quickly turned south.

The Spring of Gihon (although not by name) was first encountered in the Biblical record of David’s conquest of the Canaanite city of Jebus, when it was noted that there were water tunnels and shafts under Jebus leading up into the city itself. David’s men climbed up these passages and entered the citadel from within and overcame their Jebusite adversaries:

*Nevertheless David took the **strong hold of Zion: the same is the city of David.** And David said on that day, **Whosoever getteth up to the gutter,⁶ and smiteth the Jebusites...he shall be chief and captain...So David dwelt in the fort, and called it the city of David. And David built round about from Millo⁷ and inward.⁸***

Although the Septuagint version of 2 Kingdoms 5:6-9 doesn’t include the specific verse about the Gihon Spring watercourse and shafts, the first century Jewish-Roman historian Flavius Josephus’ account of the conquest does include this critical verse inferring that the Hebrew text of the Old Testament he consulted contained it as does the present Masoretic text:⁹

“Now the Jebusites, who were the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and were by extraction Canaanites... So he took the lower city by force, but the citadel held out

still; whence it was that the king, knowing that the proposal of dignities and rewards would encourage the soldiers to greater actions, promised that he who should first go over the ditches that were beneath the citadel, and should ascend to the citadel itself and take it, should have the command of the entire people...”¹⁰

Those tunnels and the Canaanite water shafts are still there to this day and can be explored on tour.¹¹ They precisely locate the Jebusite “citadel” area on Ophel, from underneath which the Spring of Gihon, originates. King David built his city, the city of David, i.e., Jerusalem, or Zion, inward (i.e., away from the Kidron valley) from the *Millo* (the fill-in between the summits of Ophel and Zion on the southeast ridge).

Although David set up the Tabernacle on the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite on that same summit and desired to build a magnificent Temple for the LORD, he was denied the privilege. That task fell to his son Solomon instead: *Then Solomon began to build the house of the LORD at Jerusalem in mount Moriah, where the Lord appeared unto David his father, in the place that David had prepared in the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite.*¹² Thus, Solomon’s Temple was built above the spring of Gihon on the leveled summits of Mt. Ophel and Mt. Zion bridged by the *Millo*.

After standing for some 400 years Solomon’s Temple was destroyed on the 9th of Av (*Tisha B’Av*) 587 BC by the Babylonia King Nebuchadnezzar. Then, after a 70 year exile to Babylon, the Persian King Darius the Great allowed the Jews to return to Jerusalem and rebuilt their Temple. Under the direction of Ezra and Nehemiah the Temple was rebuilt at the same exact site as the former Temple. The first historical witness to the location of this rebuilt Temple is Hecataeus of Abdera (3rd-4th century BC) who described the Temple as in the middle of the city.¹³

An even more important witness to the location of this Temple is the *Letter of Aristeas* written in the 3rd century BC to document the process of the translation of the Hebrew Scriptures (Old Testament) into Greek for the Greek speaking Jews in Alexandria, Egypt:

“When we arrived in the land of the Jews we saw the city situated in the middle of the whole of Judea on the top of a mountain of considerable altitude. On the summit the temple had been built in all is

4. The discovery in AD 1880 of the Siloam inscription about the construction of **Hezekiah’s tunnel** from the Spring of Gihon to the pool of Siloam at the southern end of the southeast ridge confirmed that the City of David and Mt. Zion were on the southeastern ridge that forms the western border of the Kidron valley.

5. **Moriah** includes the entire central range of mountains bordering the Kidron valley on the west which consists of the “Temple Mount” in the north, and the southeastern ridge containing the summits of Ophel and Zion, as well as the city of David.

6. Alternate translations: *water-shaft, water-course.*

7. Masoretic text reads: מִלּוֹ “the millo”. The Lxx translates “the millo” as “the citadel.” It is generally interpreted as a “filling.” It is basically a filling in between the summits of Mt. Ophel and Mt. Zion.

8. 2 Samuel 5:6-9 (KJV) and 2 Kingdoms 5:6-9 (Lxx).

9. Perhaps this verse was intentionally left out of the Lxx to prevent Greek-literate enemies from learning about this passage into the city so as to prevent their attacking Jewish Jerusalem by the same strategy.

10. Flavius Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, Bk VII, Chapter 3, ¶1.

11. <http://www.biblewalks.com/Sites/Gihon.html>

12. 2 Chronicles 3:12 (KJV) / 2 Paralipomena 3:12 (Lxx)

13. Flavius Josephus, *Contra Apion* 1:22.16-19

*splendor...The Temple faces the east and its back is toward the west. The whole of the floor is paved with stones and slopes down to the appointed places, that water may be conveyed to wash away the blood from the sacrifices, for many thousand beasts are sacrificed there on the feast days. And there is an inexhaustible supply of water, because an abundant natural spring gushes up from within the temple area. There are moreover wonderful and indescribable cisterns underground...But in order that we might gain complete information, we ascended to the summit of the neighbouring citadel and looked around us. It is situated in a very lofty spot, and is fortified with many towers, which have been built up to the very top of immense stones...*¹⁴

Together, these two witnesses tell us that the Temple was in the middle of the city (on the southeastern ridge) and that the Spring of Gihon gushes up through the floor of the Temple platform. Noteworthy is the description of the sloping floors of the Temple court allowing water to wash away the blood from the many sacrifices. The slightly higher citadel to the south on Mt. Zion, adjacent to and abutting the Temple on Mt. Ophel provided for surveillance of and defense of the Temple as well as a commanding view of the city and the Kidron valley below. Indeed, the citadel and the Temple were so close as to allow one to peer down from the citadel directly into the Temple courts.

And there the Temple stood until it was desecrated by the Syrian King Antiochus Epiphanes IV c. 168-167 BC.¹⁵ Three years later, Judas Maccabeus liberated Jerusalem (1 Maccabees 4:36-61) and found the Temple in ruins, its altar defiled, and its gates burned. He cleansed the Temple by removing all of its defiled stones, columns, and altar. He then rebuilt the Temple and altar--dedicating them in 164 BC and inaugurating the first celebration of Hannukah, i.e., the Festival of Lights / Feast of Dedication. However, the Jews were not able to dislodge the traitors in the adjacent citadel for another 23 years until Simon Maccabeus finally expelled them:

7. *But Simon [the Hasmonean], who was made high priest by the multitude, on the very first year of his high priesthood [142 BC] set his people free from their slavery under the Macedonians...He also took the citadel of Jerusalem by siege, and cast it down to the*

*ground, that it might not be any more a place of refuge to their enemies when they took it...he thought it their best way, and most for their advantage, to level the very mountain itself upon which the citadel happened to stand, that so the temple might be higher than it...they all set themselves to the work, and leveled the mountain, and in that work spent both day and night without any intermission, which cost them three whole years before it was removed, and brought to an entire level with the plain of the rest of the city. After which the temple was the highest of all the buildings, now the citadel, as well as the mountain whereon it stood, were demolished. And these actions were thus performed under Simon.*¹⁶ The former city of David with Mt. Zion now became the "lower city" being lower than the newer "upper city" on the mountain to the west across the Tyropoeon valley.

The last change to the Temple area before its destruction occurred in the 18th year of the reign of Herod the Great as King of Judea (c. 20-19 BC). He began rebuilding and enlarging the Temple on a grand scale to include an area for the Gentiles, justifying it on the basis of Isaiah 54:1-2. Once completed, according to Josephus, it was one of the most majestic buildings that mankind had ever seen.¹⁷

The Roman senator and historian Tacitus (AD 56 -117) also described Herod's Temple as follows:

*"The temple was built like a citadel, with walls of its own, which were constructed with more care and effort than any of the rest; the very colonnades about the temple made a splendid defense. Within the enclosure is an ever-flowing spring;"*¹⁸

Tacitus is very clear in describing Herod's Temple as having the ever-flowing spring within its confines, so it was still in the area of the Spring of Gihon, i.e., well south of the current "Temple Mount." Thus, both Josephus and Tacitus vehemently disagree with many modern day Jews and academics over the location of the Temple. The Western Wall cannot be part of the Temple based on all these historical accounts which place the Temple over the Spring of Gihon and 600 feet south of the southwest corner of the current day "Temple Mount." So what was located on the "Temple

14. *Letter of Aristeas*, R.H. Charles, Editor, Oxford <http://www.ccel.org/c/charles/otpseudepigraph/aristeas.htm>

15. Flavius Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, Bk. XII, v, 4.

16. Flavius Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, Bk. XIII, vi, 7.

17. Ernest L Martin, *The Temples that Jerusalem Forgot*, ASK Publications, Portland, OR, 2000, p. 404. Cf. Josephus, Wars, V.5.1-2 & 4-6, *Antiquities*, XV.11.1-7.

18. Tacitus, "On Jerusalem and the Temple" in *Histories*, Bk 5, §12, ¶1, http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Tacitus/Histories/5A*.html

Mount” in King Herod’s, Jesus’, and Titus’ day?

Like the Spring of Gihon anchoring the Temple to the southeastern ridge of the mountains of Moriah, there is one geographic feature that anchors a different structure to the “Temple Mount.” Flavius Josephus is again very specific on the geography and structures:

1. ACCORDINGLY, in the fifteenth year of his reign, Herod rebuilt the temple...but the citadel he repaired at a vast expense; nor was it other than a royal palace, which he called Antonia, in honor of Antony...which was a fortress that joined to the north part of the temple. It was, as I have already said, of old called the Citadel; but afterwards got the name of Antonia.¹⁹

8. Now as to the tower of Antonia...was erected upon a rock²⁰ of fifty cubits in height, and was on a great precipice; it was the work of king Herod...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...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; insomuch that, by having all conveniences that cities wanted, it might seem to be composed of several cities, but 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 of the temple, it had passages down to them both, through which the guard (for there always lay in

this tower a Roman legion) went several ways among the cloisters, with their arms, on the Jewish festivals, in order to watch the people, that they might not there attempt to make any innovations; for the temple was a fortress that guarded the city, as was the tower of Antonia a guard to the temple; ...and as that hill on which the tower of Antonia stood was the highest of these three, so did it adjoin to the new city, and was the only place that hindered the sight of the temple on the north.²¹

“In around 19 BCE, Herod the Great extended the Mount’s natural plateau by enclosing the area with four massive retaining walls and filling the voids. This artificial expansion resulted in a large flat expanse which today forms the eastern section of the Old City of Jerusalem. The trapezium shaped platform measures 488 m [1601 ft] along the west, 470 m [1543 ft] along the east, 315 m [1033 ft] along the north and 280 m [919 ft] along the south, giving a total area of approximately 150,000 m² (37 acres).”²² This is nothing like Josephus’ eyewitness account of the Temple, but rather best fits his description of the Antonia Fortress which resembled a typical Roman fortress.²³

So King Herod the Great built the Antonia Fortress with its Prætorium over the former site of the *Baris*, the Hasmonean era citadal. It was connected to the Temple at its northwest corner by two 600 ft long colonnades, one above the other, for rapid deployment of a Roman Legion (5,000 to 11,000 troops +/- calvary) into the Temple to quell any unrest. The Antonia Fortress was so huge, that it blocked any view of the Temple when one approached Jerusalem from the north. The Prætorium, Pontius Pilate’s office and judgment hall, were contained therein as well.

The most important geographic feature of the Antonia Fortress was that it was built upon and around a great precipitous rock, the rock on which Jesus was believed to have been judged by Pilate: the *lithostratos*, or in Hebrew *gabbatha*. In honor of his mother St. Helen, the Emperor Constantine the Great ordered the small Church of St. Cyrus and St. John to be built over this rock. In the 5th century it was replaced by the larger Church of the Holy Wisdom,²⁴ and by the Dome

19. Josephus, *Wars*, I.5.5 It was joined to the NW corner of the Temple by two 600 foot long colonnades, one above the other.

20. “That central rock outcropping was a significant spot in the fortress, as Josephus stated, and even the apostle John [19:13] singled it out for comment regarding the judgment of Jesus. John called it the *lithostrothon* [a rock, on which people could stand and be judged]. It is most often translated *pavement*. This ‘Rock’ had a Hebrew name: *Gabbatha* [which meant an important *high place*.] The Haram esh-Sharif built around this well know ‘rock outcropping’ was the only building with its four massive walls to survive the Jewish/Roman War. We can still see its stones in place in its lower courses (all 10,000 of them). Those Herodian walls of Fort Antonia (including where the Jewish Wailing Wall is located) have withstood the ravages of time for centuries.” Ernest L. Martin. *New Evidence for the Site of the Temple in Jerusalem*. ASK Publications, Portland, OR, 2000, p. 13, <http://askelm.com/temple/t001211.htm>

21. Josephus, *War*, V.5.8

22. Wikipedia on dimensions of the “Temple Mount”

23. Ernest L. Martin, “Fort Antonia Was a Roman City,” in *New Evidence for the Site of the Temple in Jerusalem*, pp. 60-74

24. Mike M. Joseph, *Jerusalem’s Temple Mount: the Hoax of the Millennium*, Author House, Bloomington, IN, 2011, p. 128.

of the Rock by the Umayyad muslims in the 7th.

The 6th century Piacenza pilgrim who visited Jerusalem during the time of Justinian (reigned AD 527 -565), precisely identified the Church of Holy Wisdom (*Hagia Sophia* in Greek). which he noted was the former Prætorium of Pilate. He also mentions the “4-cornered rock” in which people of that time believed they could see the footprints of Jesus pressed into the rock. The pilgrim writes:

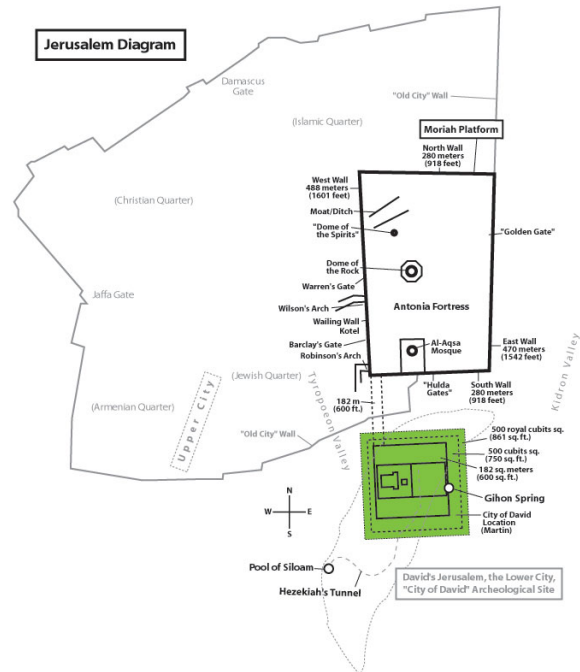
*We prayed in the praetorium where the Lord was tried, where there is the small basilica of Saint Sophia... In that basilica there is the seat where Pilate sat when he tried the Lord. Moreover the four-cornered stone is there, on which he was standing in the middle of the praetorium.*²⁵

St. Sophronius, the Archbishop of Jerusalem and the recorder of the Life of St. Mary of Egypt, remembered this prominent rock lying within the Church of Holy Wisdom from his worship there as a child.²⁶

However, the Church of Holy Wisdom did not survive long. The Persians destroyed it in AD 614 (looting a fragment of the Holy Cross and taking it back to Persia).²⁷ After the muslim conquest of Jerusalem in AD 638 this church was initially spared, but later replaced by the Dome of the Rock in AD 689-691.²⁸

So now we have a pretty good idea of the locations of the Temple and the Antonia Fortress at the time of Christ. The Temple was located on the lowered summits of Ophel /Zion on the southeastern ridge 600 feet south of the southwest corner of the Antonia Fortress (the Temple Mount). Two wide colonnades, at ground level and high above it beginning at the southwest tower of the Antonia Fortress led into the Temple allowing Roman troops to quickly proceed into the Temple when needed to keep the crowds under control. Internally, the Temple was a square 600 feet to a side and still located over the spring of Gihon. With the open space around the Temple walls, it was a square 750 feet to a side. The Canaanite water courses and shafts were still underneath the Temple providing gushing water, supplemented by piped in water stored in cisterns nearby around Jerusalem. One would expect

that parts of the floor of the Temple would have been sloped, as in former days, to facilitate the washing and draining away of the blood of the slaughtered animal sacrifices. The “Water Gate” of the Temple would have been the eastern most gate on the southern wall of the Temple in the Kidron valley closely in line with the exit of the Spring of Gihon as it flowed south after exiting east from underneath Mt. Ophel. The tunnel of Hezekiah carrying water from the spring to the pool of Siloam would also have been accessible through this gate. The massive virtually seamless walls of the Temple rose up 450 feet from its southeast corner. It’s foundation stones lay 150 feet below the ground level of the Kidron. Mt. Zion was directly to the south of the Temple, but already leveled even with the city of David, the “lower city.” The upper city was to the west across the Tyropoeon valley. Three fortresses were located in the upper city, one very close to Herod’s Palace, which was to the west of the Antonia Fortress. So the Western Wall is neither part of the Temple nor its western supporting wall. Instead it is part of an unclean gentile, military base, the Roman Antonia Fortress. So



LOCATION OF TEMPLE (IN GREEN) AND ANTONIA FORTRESS²⁹

the layers of stones standing here were not from the

25. “The Piacenza Pilgrim” (c. AD 570), Andrew S. Jacobs, translator, Scripps College, <http://andrewjacobs.org/rs90/piacenza.html> ¶23
 26. Dr. Ernest L. Martin, “New Evidence for the Site of the Temple in Jerusalem”, <http://askelm.com/temple/t001211.htm>, ref 34.
 27. This fragment of the Cross was returned to Constantinople by the Emperor Heraclius in AD 628 “St. Helena and the Churches in Jerusalem,” <http://mariannedorman.homestead.com/Helena.html>
 28. Wikipedia, on Church of Holy Wisdom in Jerusalem.

29. **Post-Destruction Accounts Regarding the Site of the Temple**
 Brian K. McPherson and Scott McPherson, http://www.biblestudying.net/temple_schematics5.html

Temple nor in the Jewish part of Jerusalem.

AD 70, THE DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM

Flavius Josephus chronicled the First Roman-Jewish War and the destruction of Jerusalem as an eyewitness. As commander of the defeated Jewish Galilean forces, he surrendered to Vespasian in AD 67. He mentioned to Vespasian that the Jewish Messianic prophesies that instigated the war referred to Vespasian becoming Emperor of Rome, which occurred 2 years later. As a result, Josephus was set free, took the Emperor's family name of Flavius as his own, and then served Vespasian's son Titus as a translator for the rest of the of the war including the siege of Jerusalem in AD 70. Here are a few highlights of the siege from Josephus:

*And now the Romans...raised their banks in one and twenty days, after they had cut down all the trees that were in the country that adjoined to the city, and that for ninety furlongs round about...And truly the very view itself of the country was a melancholy thing; for those places which were before adorned with trees and pleasant gardens were now become a 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 the signs of beauty quite waste: nor if any one that had known the place before, had come on a sudden to it now, would he have known it again;...*³⁰

1. Now as soon as the army had no more people to slay or to plunder...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 eminency; that is, Phasaelus, and Hippicus, and Mariamne,³¹ and so much of the wall as enclosed the city on the west side. This wall was spared, in order to afford a camp for such as were to lie in garrison, as were the towers 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, 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 had ever

30. Josephus, *Wars*, VI.1.1

31. Three Roman Forts in the northwest corner of the upper city build by King Herod to protect his palace. Phasaelus was Herod's son, Hippicus his general & friend, and Miriamne his 3rd wife.

*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.*³²

*2. And now the Romans, judging that it was in vain to spare what was round about the holy house, burnt all those places...They also burnt down the treasury chambers, in which was an immense quantity of money, and an immense number of garments, and other precious goods there repositied; and, to speak all in a few words, there it was that the entire riches of the Jews were heaped up together...*³³

*And now all the soldiers had such vast quantities of the spoils which they had gotten by plunder, that in Syria a pound weight of gold was sold for half its former value.*³⁴

*And where is now that great city, 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 but that monument of it preserved, I mean the camp of those that hath destroyed it, which still dwells upon its ruins; some unfortunate old men also lie upon the ashes of the temple, and a few women are there preserved alive by the enemy, for our bitter shame and reproach.*³⁵

So all the walls and building of Jerusalem were destroyed, no stone left upon another. The Temple with all its gold was set afire. The gold melted into its foundations, so the entire structure was uprooted in an effort to retrieve the last bit of gold from the Temple and its treasury. So much was looted that the value of gold dropped by half. All that was left was the western wall of the Antonia Fortress and three tall military towers. That's how Christ's prophecies were fulfilled.

In the following centuries many told of the desolation of Jerusalem.^{36,37} The christian historian

32. Josephus, *Wars*, VII.1.1

33. Josephus, *Wars*, VI.5.2

34. Josephus, *Wars*, VI.6.1

35. Josephus, *War*, VII.8.7, from Eleazar, the commander of the Jewish forces at Masada, in his speech to the defenders of Masada.

36. Brian K. McPherson and Scott McPherson, "Post-Destruction Accounts Regarding the Site of the Temple," <http://www.biblestudying.net/temple1.html>; great documentation here.

37. Ernest L Martin, *The Temples that Jerusalem Forgot*, ASK



THE GOOD WORD

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Eusebius of Caesarea (AD 263-369) wrote: ***“Zion shall be plowed as a field, and Jerusalem shall be as a storehouse of fruit,”*** a prophecy [Micah 3:12] which was only actually fulfilled after the impious treatment of our Saviour. For from that time to this, utter desolation has possessed the land; their once famous **Mount Zion**, instead of being, as once it was, **...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 has it, **a stone-quarry.**³⁸

The area above the Spring of Gihon became a farm, a garbage dump, a marketplace, a quarry. Stones cast aside from the war were reclaimed and used by the Emperor Hadrian for building the new Roman city Aelia Capitolina. Jews wishing to live in Jerusalem, when allowed, requested to live close to the Gihon Spring or the pool of Siloam. Twice in the 4th century they attempted to rebuild the Temple over the spring to no avail.³⁹ Eventually they built a synagogue in the cave that leads to those underground water courses and

shafts of the Spring of Gihon which are accessible today. The Jews remained in this area until a major earthquake in AD 1033 turned the spring of Gihon bitter and even septic (between AD 1033-1077). Also the city wall around this area collapsed exposing the area to attacks by the Seljuk Turks and others. Because of these ominous problems the Jerusalem Academy abandoned Jerusalem and moved to Damascus in AD 1077. With the capture of Jerusalem by the Christian Crusaders in AD 1099, Jews were forbidden to enter the gates of Jerusalem for the next 50 years.⁴⁰

The last straw was the misidentification (c. AD 1187) of the “Temple Mount” as the true site of the Temple by a Jewish merchant and traveler, Benjamin of Tudela. His identification was based solely on contemporary local rumors about finding the tombs of Kings of Judea including David and Solomon on the southwestern ridge, thus changing the location of “Zion”. Despite vigorous arguments to the contrary by the great Jewish sages Maimonides and David Kimchi, without the presence of the Jewish Academy in Jerusalem for over a century, Benjamin of Tudela’s mistake became accepted as truth in the minds of most Jews, Christians, and Muslims for the next 900 years.

Publications, Portland, OR, 2000, p. 404, great documentation here.
38. Eusebius of Caesarea, ***Proof of the Gospel***, Bk 8, chapter 3 Sect. 406, http://www.tertullian.org/fathers/eusebius_de_10_book8.htm
39. Under Constantine the Great and under Julian the Apostate.

40. Ernest L. Martin, “*The Expansion and Portability of Zion*,” 2000, <http://askelm.com/temple/t000801.htm>