



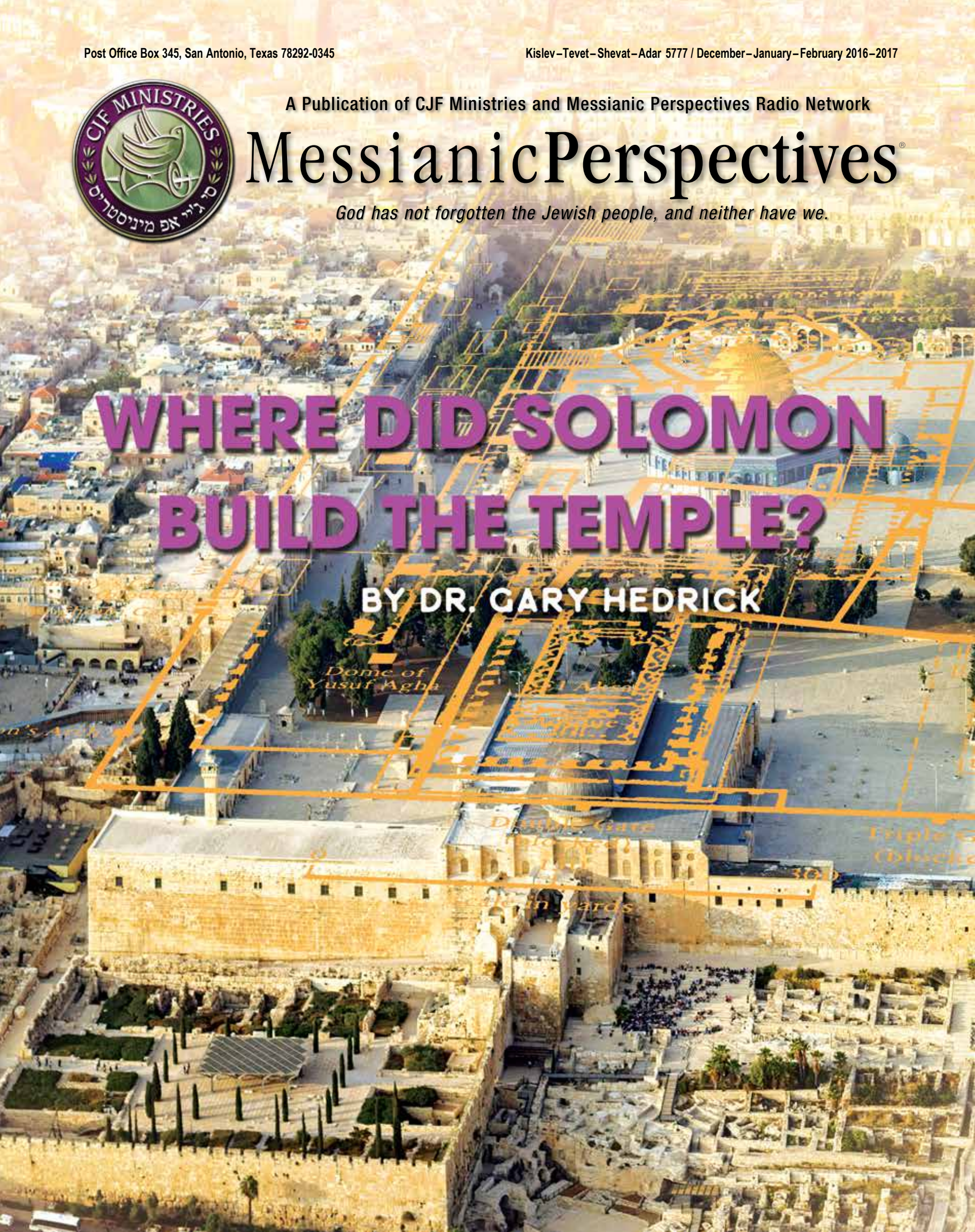
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Messianic Perspectives®

God has not forgotten the Jewish people, and neither have we.

WHERE DID SOLOMON BUILD THE TEMPLE?

BY DR. GARY HEDRICK



We are living in tumultuous times. Many things that we've always taken for granted are being called into question.

One hotly-disputed question these days is, "Were the ancient Temples really on the Temple Mount?" You'd think the fact that Mount Moriah (and the manmade platform around it) has been known for many centuries as "the Temple Mount"¹ would provide an important clue, wouldn't you?

It's a bit like the facetious query about who's buried in Grant's tomb. Who else would be in that tomb but Mr. Grant and what else would have been on the Temple Mount but the Temple?

But not everyone agrees. Ernest Martin (1932-2002), an eccentric weatherman-turned-religious-researcher and one-time member of Herbert Armstrong's Worldwide Church of God, built a writing career on cranking out tomes about controversial topics. His trademark was arguing against the "conventional wisdom" of tradition. If tradition said "A" was true, Martin would argue for "B." It was a winning formula, and his books enjoyed brisk sales during his lifetime. He was a brilliant man and a skilled wordsmith who could make even the most implausible argument sound convincing.



It shouldn't have surprised anyone, then, when Martin decided that thousands of years of tradition were wrong and the Temples were never on the Temple Mount. If he were alive today, Martin might introduce his theory by saying, "Everything you thought you knew about the location of the ancient Temples is wrong!"

Dr. Martin has since passed from the scene; however, others have taken up his mantle and written even more books claiming that the ancient Jewish Temples weren't on the Temple Mount.

So, what are we to make of this? Were the Temples on the Temple Mount or not? Does it matter where they were? Should we care? These are some of the questions we'll be addressing in this article.

Historical Background

The people of Israel had three central places of worship in ancient times: the Tabernacle, the First Temple, and the Second Temple. Around 538 BC, the Jewish captives were released by King Cyrus of Persia to return from exile to their Land. Zerubbabel and Joshua the priest led the effort to rebuild the Second Temple, and work commenced around 536 BC on the site of the First Temple, which the Babylonians had destroyed. The new Temple was simpler and more modest than its impressive predecessor had been.² Centuries later, when Yeshua sat contemplatively on the Mount of Olives with His disciples (Matt. 24), they looked down on the Temple Mount as King Herod's workers were busily at work remodeling and expanding the Second Temple compound. That's why we know it today as the Herodian Temple.³

In ancient times, the Jerusalem Temple was the center of Jewish life—religiously, socially, politically, and even economically. So it was situated in a prominent, elevated location where it could be easily spotted, especially from the original City of David (i.e., Zion) which was down the hillside south of the Temple Mount (Moriah).

There has been much discussion over the years about precisely where on the Temple Mount the Temples once stood. There are three main theories, but they all agree that the Temples were somewhere on the Temple Mount platform. In earlier times, before it became such a "hot potato" issue, even local Arabs and Palestinians agreed with this assessment.⁴ Everyone—even people who weren't particularly fond of the idea—knew that the Jewish Temples had been on Mount Moriah, or the Temple Mount.

Enter Ernest Martin with his theory. He claimed that what we today call "the Temple Mount" was in reality the site of the Roman Antonia Fortress. So according to Martin, the holiest site in Judaism, the Western Wall (*haKotel*), is actually the remains of a pagan (Roman) military installation. He said the Temples were located a thousand yards or so (roughly the length of ten football fields) farther down the hill at the Gihon Springs in the City of David. It might make for entertaining reading, but does such a view match the facts on the ground?

Nothing remains of Solomon's or Herod's Temples, so there is no direct proof of their location—or even of their existence, for that matter. The evidence is circumstantial; but it is compelling, nonetheless.⁵

In fact, it's relatively easy to show that something of much greater significance than the Antonia Fortress must have been situated on the Temple Mount during the Second Temple Period. Since 1967, archaeologists have gone deep underground excavating the retaining walls of the platform (which covered some 37 acres). Some of the surface stones were replaced later; however, the deeper stones are clearly and demonstrably Herodian, marking the location of the Temple compound.

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Weighing the Evidence

1. Geography

- a. Scripture tells us that when the Persians finally allowed the Jewish people to return to their Land (circa 538 BC), there were elderly people among them who remembered the First Temple (Ezra 3:12). It says they recalled the resplendence of Solomon's Temple and broke out weeping when they saw the simple and unadorned Temple of Zerubbabel. They considered it a poor substitute for Solomon's Temple, which had been destroyed some 70 years earlier. This confirms that both ancient Temples were constructed on the same site. If Zerubbabel wasn't building on the site of Solomon's Temple, those old-timers would have known it. So if we find the site of the Second Temple, we've also found the site of the First Temple.
- b. Martin's theory proposes that the Temples stood in the City of David (the original Jerusalem settlement, also known as Zion, at the Gihon Spring), south of the Temple Mount. However, the Bible clearly says the Ark of the Covenant was taken FROM the City of David and brought up INTO the Temple:

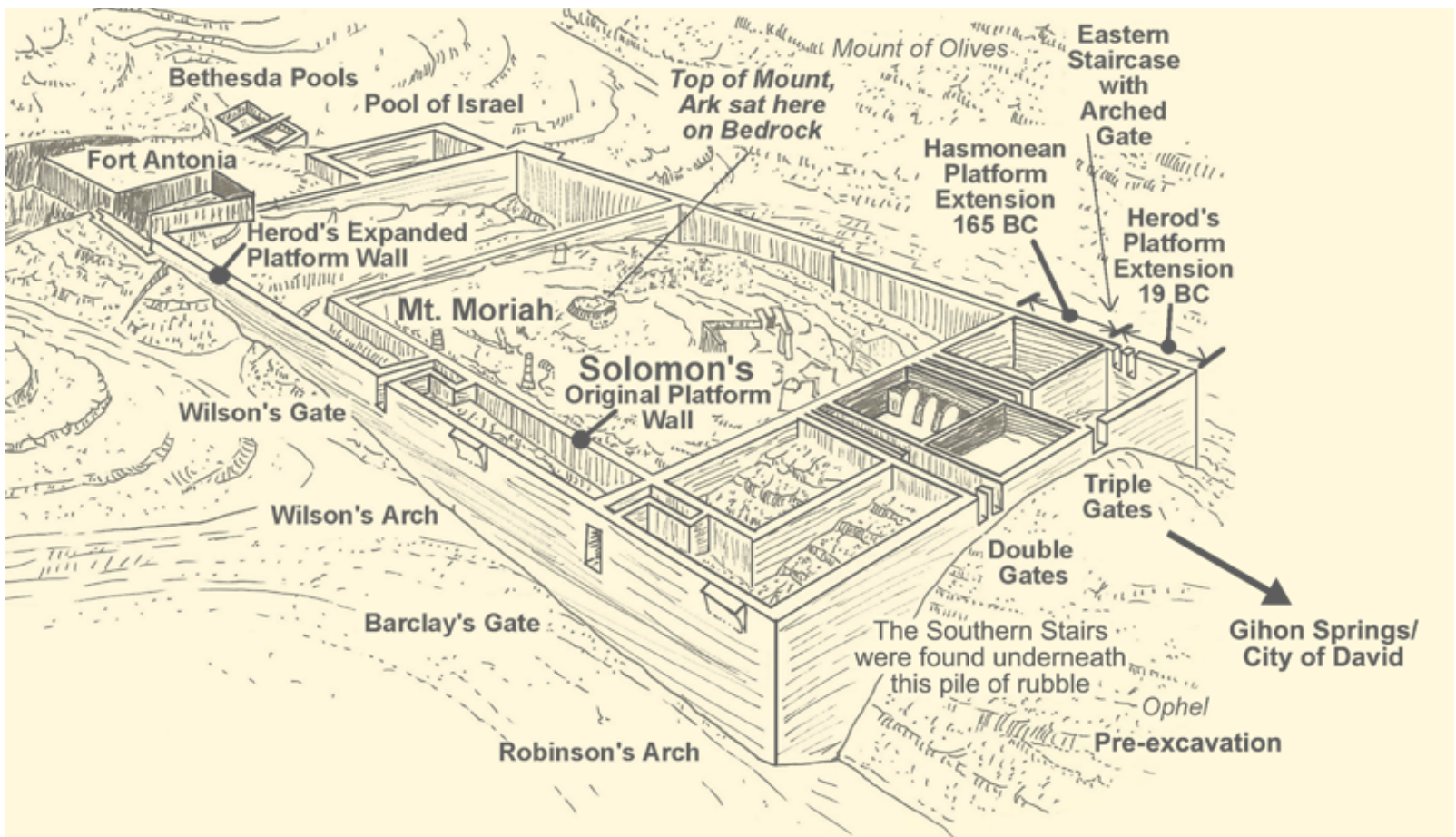
Now Solomon assembled the elders of Israel and all the heads of the tribes, the chief fathers of the children of Israel, to King Solomon in Jerusalem, that they might bring up the ark of the covenant of the LORD from the City of David, which [is] Zion. . . .

Then the priests brought in the ark of the covenant of the LORD to its place, into the inner sanctuary of the temple, to the Most Holy [Place], under the wings of the cherubim (1 Kings 8:1, 6).

Once Solomon's Temple was finished, great pomp and circumstance accompanied the Ark's removal from its temporary location in the City of David as the priests carried it carefully up the hill to the Temple Mount. This raises the question: if the newly-rebuilt Temple was already IN Zion, as Martin claims, why would they have to move the Ark FROM Zion?

- c. Elementary Bible geography informs us that Mount Moriah is distinct from the City of David (i.e., Zion). They are two distinct sites in Jerusalem about two-thirds of a mile apart. The Temple Mount was formed by constructing a retaining wall around the perimeter of Mount Moriah and filling in the area to form an elevated platform. Herod's platform was roughly 37 acres. Solomon's was somewhat smaller (see artist's sketch). The Holy of Holies was situated where the bedrock protrudes, marking the highest point of Mount Moriah:

Now Solomon began to build the house of the LORD at Jerusalem on Mount Moriah, where [the LORD] had appeared to his father David, at the place that David had prepared on the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite (2 Chron. 3:1).



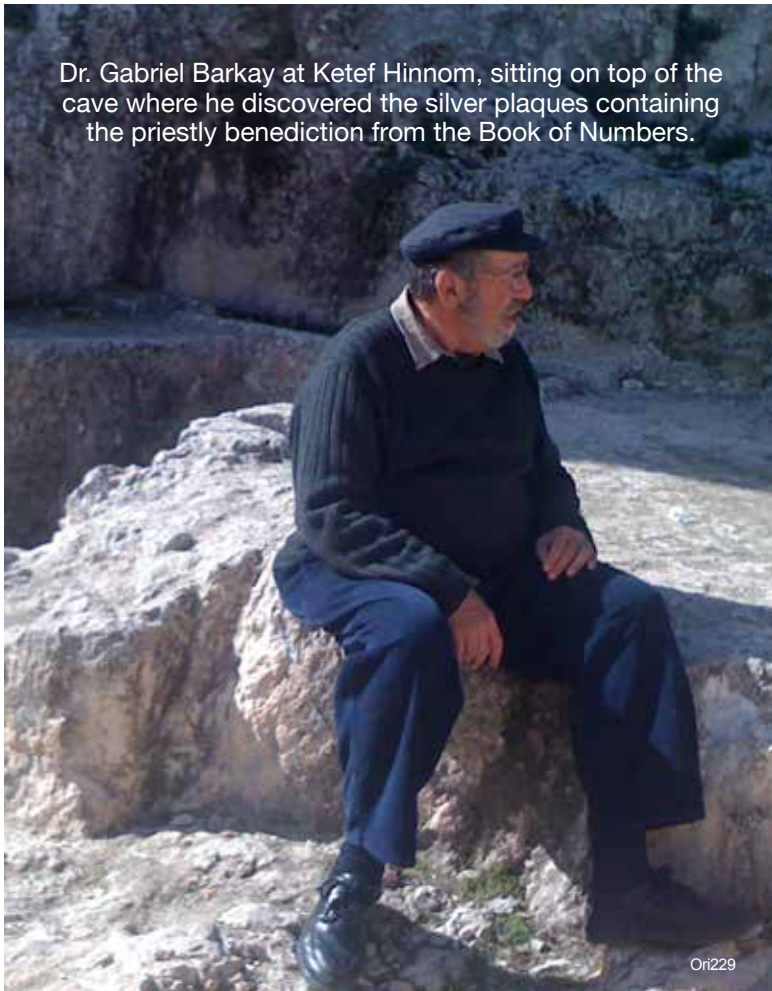
An artist's sketch of the layout of the Temple Mount (omitting the Temple itself) illustrating how Herod expanded the original platform of Solomon's Temple. Note the location of the bedrock on Mount Moriah—the traditional site where Abraham went to offer his son Isaac as a sacrifice (Gen. 22). Per Jewish tradition, this is where the Holy of Holies was situated in the ancient Temples. Today most archaeologists believe the bedrock is in the basement of the Dome of the Rock (at the location shown in this illustration).

2. Archaeology

Archaeologists (not pseudo-archaeologists, but real ones!) have uncovered a great deal of evidence that confirms the existence of the ancient Temples on the traditional Temple Mount. The theory that the Temple was not situated on the Temple Mount is inconsistent with the following lines of evidence from antiquity.

a. *Thousands of coins and other artifacts from the Jewish Temples have been dug up on the Temple Mount.*

As we noted earlier, before Israel became a state in 1948, it was generally accepted even among Arabs and Palestinians that the Temple Mount was the site of the ancient Jewish Temples. It has been only more recently, with Palestinian factions coalescing into an anti-Semitic political bloc, that they started claiming otherwise.⁶



That's why Islamic groups in Israel have opposed archaeological digging on the Temple Mount for the past several decades.⁷ Since they control the area, no archaeological work has been done. They don't want archaeologists poking around for proof of the existence of Solomon's Temple. Many of them subscribe to a narrative that says the kingdoms of David and Solomon never existed and Israel ("Palestine") never belonged to the Jews. They don't want anyone finding evidence that might contradict that narrative.

Since the Palestinians won't let the Israeli archaeologists dig on the Temple Mount, however, the Lord arranged for the Palestinians to do the work *for* them! If the situation wasn't so serious (and potentially dangerous), this would be a funny story.

Here's what happened. In 1999, Palestinian workers began quietly working on an area of the Temple Mount where they had to dig up and remove approximately 9,000 tons of dirt and rubble, some of it from deep underground. They knew what they were doing was illegal, so they worked quietly and surreptitiously to keep it under the radar. But their mysterious activities eventually drew the attention of our friend Dr. Gabriel Barkay, one of Israel's leading archaeologists, and his colleague Zachi Dvira. One day as the trucks left the Temple Mount loaded with dirt and debris containing (potentially) the remnants of 4,000 years or more of Mideast history, some Israelis followed them. They couldn't believe their eyes when they saw the mountain of rubble near the Kidron Valley where the workers were dumping their loads out like garbage. The Israelis let them continue the project until 2004, when they obtained permission from the government to remove the rubble and begin sifting through it for artifacts. Thus, the Temple Mount Sifting Project (TMSP) was born.⁸

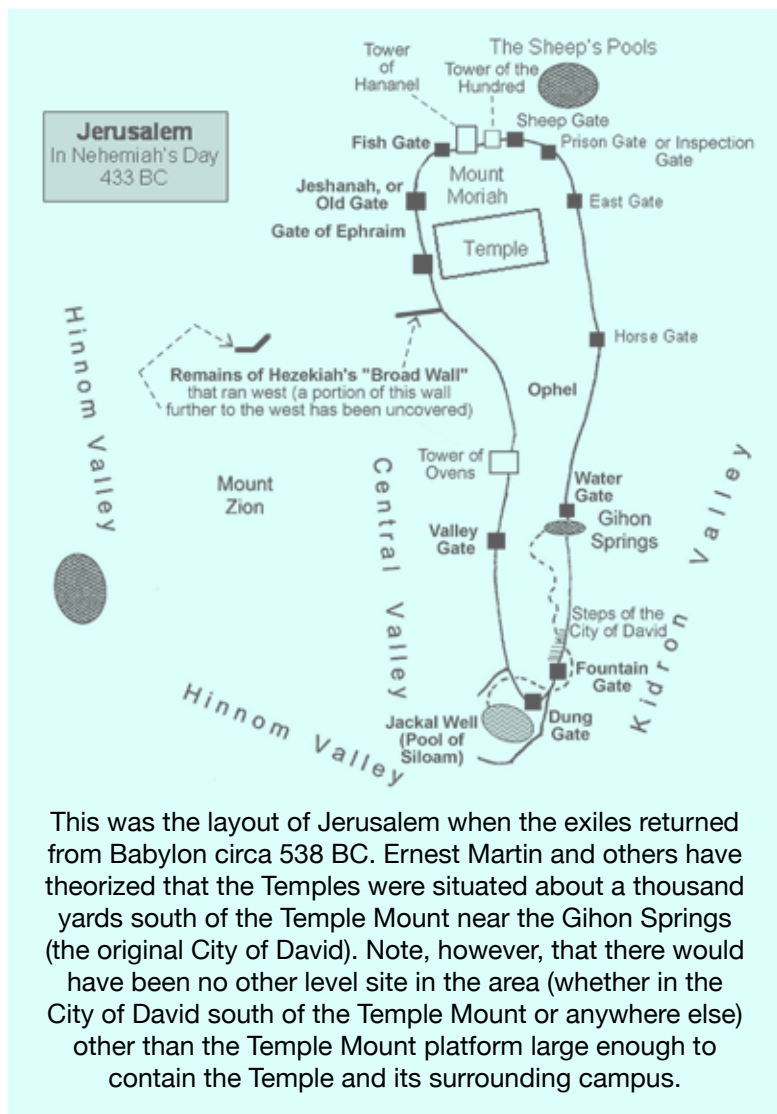
That mountain of "garbage" has produced a treasure trove of priceless finds from both the First and Second Temple periods, including thousands of coins, lots of pottery fragments, pieces of ancient figurines, stone weights, tiles from mosaic floors, as well as arrowheads and other weapons, including even an ancient sling-shot, perhaps like the one David used when he killed Goliath.



One of the most interesting First Temple finds from the sifting project is a clay seal (see photo) bearing the name "Immer" in ancient Hebrew. Pashur "the priest, the son of Immer" is identified in Jeremiah 20:1 as "chief governor in the house of the LORD." The house (*beit*) of the Lord, of course, was the Temple. Dr. Barkay believes that this seal may have been attached to an item that had been deposited in the Temple treasury in the care of the priests. The impression on the back of the seal (presumably made before the clay had dried and hardened) indicates that the item was contained in a fabric bag of some sort.⁹

There's a lot more we could say here, but let's not get lost in the details. The point is that God, in His sovereignty, used the Palestinians to provide overwhelming archaeological evidence for an extensive amount of First and Second Temple activity on the Temple Mount (i.e., Mount Moriah).

b. *The Temple Mount platform is the only site in the area large enough to support the Temple and its surrounding platform.*



c. *Pseudo-archaeology is often fraught with mistakes.*

Bob Cornuke, president of the Bible Archaeology Search and Exploration Institute, contends that the Temple Mount can't be the location of the ancient Temples because it would contradict the words of Jesus that "not one stone will be left here upon another." Obviously, we can see stones stacked up at the Western Wall (and underneath it), so he says that means the Temples couldn't have been on the Temple Mount:

Jesus warned His disciples of the coming destruction of the temple and that not one stone of the temple would be left on top of another. Matthew 24:1-2 says, "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.'" Christ's words clearly state that the entire temple, each and every stone, would be dug up, dislodged, and tossed away. It is interesting to note that there are massive stone blocks by the thousands set in the wall supporting the Temple Mount platform. Was Jesus wrong in His prophesying that not one stone would remain standing?¹⁰

Here's Cornuke's mistake: the huge Herodian stones that comprise the Western Wall of the Temple Mount were *not* (I repeat, *not*) part of the Temple. The Western Wall was a section of the huge retaining wall that supported the Temple Mount platform. Look again at the verses Cornuke quotes from Matthew 24. The Lord refers to "the buildings of THE TEMPLE" (v. 1, emphasis mine), not the retaining wall of the Temple Mount platform. We believe the Bible is verbally inspired, which means every word is there for a reason. The Lord says what He means and He means what He says. He never said that nothing would remain of the retaining wall. As our friend Dr. Randall Price has pointed out, buildings and retaining walls are two entirely different things!

The survival of the Western Wall doesn't conflict with the words of Yeshua. In fact, it's a good thing that portion of the Western Wall is still there. Its presence serves as a reminder of the location of the Temples, and of the ferocity and brutality of the judgment Israel suffered at the hands of the Romans. It should also remind us of the Lord's promise to return someday, build the (Millennial) Temple, and restore the Kingdom to Israel—and this time, she will be a believing nation (Matt. 23:39; Rom. 11:26)!¹¹

The Western Wall (Heb., *haKotel*), and its subterranean Herodian stones, are extremely important. Tourists can see the wall's huge and impressive foundation stones today when they visit the tunnels under the Temple Mount. We do this with our tour groups every year. Seeing those vast foundation stones is an unforgettable experience.¹² But again, *they were not part of the Temple!* The Martin theory is simply wrong here.



Marilyn Sams, another enterprising writer, compounds Cornuke's error by claiming in her preface that as the Lord looked down on the Temple Mount from the Mount of Olives, He would have been looking at the eastern retaining wall, which she says (without citing any proof) was 500 feet high ("about 450 feet high, with walls 50 feet high on top of that"). That's half the height of the Eiffel Tower! Her point is evidently that anything on the other side of that wall (on the Temple site) would have been blocked from their view; and therefore, the Lord must have been looking at the retaining wall when He said one stone would not be left upon another.¹³

This is only one of numerous blunders committed by pseudo-archaeologists when they advance their lame theories and bogus "discoveries."

WEIGHING IN ON THE CONTROVERSY

KEY FIGURES IN THE DEBATE

DAN BAHAT

Former government archaeologist for the Jerusalem District who vigorously advocates for the traditional site (where the Dome of the Rock now stands) on the Temple Mount. He has declared that theories about the Temple never having been on the Temple Mount are “utterly ridiculous.”

BOB CORNUKE

Author and amateur archaeologist who runs the Bible Archaeology Search and Exploration Institute (BASE) out of his home in Colorado. He followed in Ron Wyatt's footsteps (see below) in claiming that the “real” Mount Sinai is in Saudi Arabia.¹⁴ More recently, Cornuke has claimed that the ancient Temple of Solomon was never on the Temple Mount. His book *TEMPLE: Amazing New Discoveries That Change Everything About the Location of Solomon's Temple* (2014) presents a theory similar to Marilyn Sams' and Ernest Martin's (see both below)—namely, that the Temple of Solomon, contrary to longstanding tradition, academic consensus, and a preponderance of circumstantial evidence, wasn't located on the Temple Mount.

LAMBERT DOLPHIN

A Stanford-trained physicist who worked at the Stanford Research Institute (SRI) for 30 years before leaving in 1987 to form his own geophysical consulting service and to pursue his Bible teaching ministry. Lambert was also one of the founders, along with Jim Milligan and Michael Kollen, of the Temple Mount website in the mid-1990s.¹⁵ Dolphin says Martin's theory is misinformed. On his personal website, he has provided a factsheet on Wyatt's claims (see below).¹⁶

GORDON FRANZ

A respected archaeological researcher, writer, and evangelical Christian who has participated in numerous excavations in and around Jerusalem.¹⁷ His informative paper “Cornuke's *Temple* Book: The Greatest Archaeological Blunder of All Time” demolishes the Martin-Cornuke-Sams theory. It's available as a PDF at lifeandland.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Review-of-Cornuke-Temple-12-Twelve.pdf.

ASHER KAUFMAN

Dr. Kaufman lives in Israel where he has served as Honorary Research Fellow at the College of Judea and Samaria, and as Emeritus Professor at Hebrew University. Kaufman, whose PhD is in physics, takes the position that the ancient Temple was situated over the site where the Dome of the Tablets (also known as the Dome of the Spirits) stands today on the Temple Mount, a few dozen meters north of the Dome of the Rock. He considers the Martin theory a fantasy.

ERNEST MARTIN

A researcher and minister in Herbert W. Armstrong's Worldwide Church of God (until he left the church in 1974) who enjoyed writing about secrets and mysteries.¹⁸ Martin (1932-2002) had some background in archaeology and negotiated a working relationship in the late 1960s between Ambassador College (Armstrong's school) and Hebrew University in Jerusalem so Ambassador students could participate in archaeological digs in Israel. In *The Temples That Jerusalem Forgot* (1994) he theorized that Solomon's Temple was not on the Temple Mount (see Bob Cornuke above).

BENJAMIN MAZAR

An Israeli historian and archaeologist known for his work on the historical geography of Israel, including the Temple Mount. He was also a former president of Hebrew University in Jerusalem. He was outspoken in his opposition to sensationalist theories like Martin's. Mazar died in 1995 at age 89.¹⁹

DAVID MERLING

Associate Director and Curator of the Horn Archaeological Museum at Andrews University in Michigan. Since the late Ron Wyatt (see below) self-identified as a Seventh Day Adventist, this SDA school provides (as a public service) an information packet about the suspicious nature of his sensational claims.²⁰

RANDALL PRICE

Price has a PhD from The University of Texas (Austin) and is widely regarded as one of the evangelical world's preeminent archaeologists. He teaches biblical archaeology at Liberty University and has been leading digs at Qumran on and off since 2002 under the watchful eye of the Israel Antiquities Authority. He has said, “The sensationalists' theory that the Temples were located somewhere other than the modern Temple Mount are based on their misinterpretation of the ancient sources and an avoidance of the archaeological evidence. This maverick position will not last long.”²¹

CHAIM RICHMAN

International director of the Temple Mount Institute in the Old City of Jerusalem, an organization dedicated to the rebuilding of the Jerusalem Temple on Mount Moriah (the Temple Mount). Temple furnishings, vestments, and tools are on display at the Institute, all painstakingly recreated as closely as possible to biblical and/or traditional specifications. He supports the traditional Temple Mount view.

LEEN RITMEYER

An archaeological architect (PhD from Manchester University in England) and member of the Christadelphian sect who served from 1973 to 1983 as the official architect for Benjamin Mazar's excavation of the southern retaining wall of the Temple Mount (see above).²² He's an advocate for the traditional Temple Mount location.

Other Problems with Martin's Location

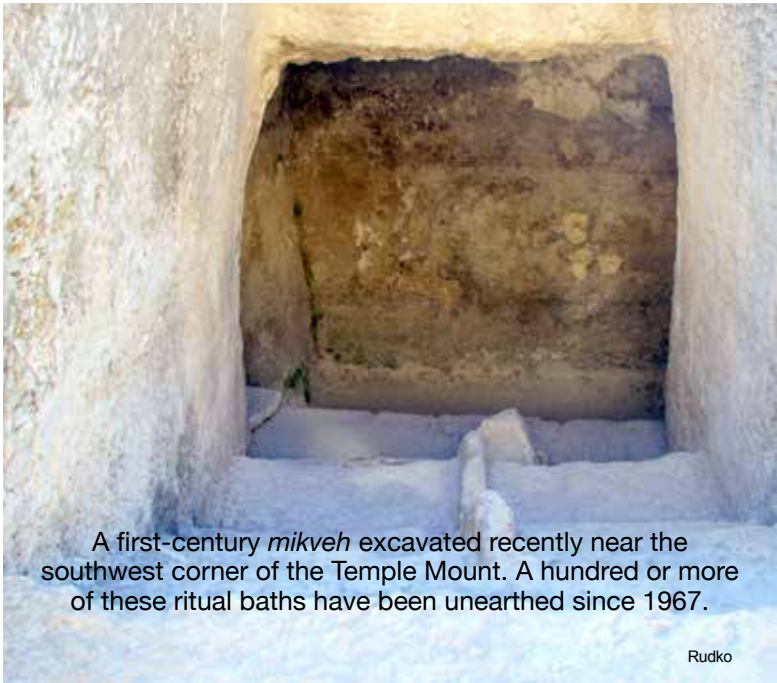
- In 1871, Charles Simon Clermont-Ganneau, a French archaeologist, found a slab of limestone bearing a Greek inscription warning non-Jews not to enter the Temple courtyard under penalty of death. He later remarked, "Indeed, the place where I found it is only 50 meters away from the Haram al Sharif, the sanctuary of the Jews," that is, the Temple Mount—not Martin's location.²⁵



An ancient tablet discovered near the Temple Mount warning non-Jews not to enter the Temple compound.

© The Israel Museum, Jerusalem

- The Emperor Hadrian erected a Temple of Jupiter (complete with an equestrian statue) on the Temple Mount after his defeat of the Jewish resistance in AD 135. A portion of the statue's base has been excavated at the Temple Mount—not even close to Martin's location.²⁶
- The excavation of the area around the southern and western walls of the Temple Mount since 1967 has uncovered dozens of *mikvot* (ritual baths) required for Temple purification rites. There's nothing equivalent to this at Martin's location.²⁷



A first-century *mikveh* excavated recently near the southwest corner of the Temple Mount. A hundred or more of these ritual baths have been unearthed since 1967.

Rudko

TUVIA SAGIV

Israeli architect and proponent of the southern Temple site (the "Southern Hypothesis") situating the ancient Temples on the Temple Mount, but due east of the Western Wall, on the opposite side of the Dome of the Rock from Kaufman's northern site (see above). He doesn't take Martin's claims seriously.

MARILYN SAMS

Author of *The Jerusalem Temple Mount Myth* (2015), in which she expounds on the Ernest Martin theory (above) and concludes that Solomon's Temple was situated in the City of David over the Gihon Springs, nearly a mile south of the Temple Mount.

GERSHON SALOMON

Founder and leader of the Temple Mount Faithful movement in Israel. Salomon was a paratrooper in the 1967 Arab-Israeli War and had a religious experience near the Western Wall when Israeli forces were fighting to liberate the Old City from Syrian and Jordanian forces.²³ He subsequently dedicated his life to rebuilding the Temple on the Temple Mount.

CHARLES WARREN

Sir Charles Warren (1840-1927), an Anglican layman and a noted general in the British military (the Royal Engineers), was one of the first Christian experts of the modern era to focus on the archaeology of the Temple Mount. Building on the earlier work of Edward Robinson, he excavated Robinson's Arch near the Western Wall from 1867 to 1870. He also discovered "Warren's Shaft," a passageway leading downward to Hezekiah's tunnel below the ancient City of David near the Gihon Springs. He never doubted that the Temple Mount was the actual site of the ancient Temples.

RON WYATT

A layman (nurse by trade) who died in 1999 and had no formal archaeological training, but claimed—while providing scant proof or evidence—to have unearthed scores of biblical artifacts that would make the curator of the British Museum blush with envy. His work is widely regarded as the preeminent example of modern tabloid-style ("fake news") pseudo-archaeology.²⁴

JOSEPH ZIAS

Curator of Archaeology and Anthropology for the Israel Antiquities Authority (IAA) from 1972 until his retirement in 1997. Zias, an avowed critic of sloppy pseudo-archaeology, once wrote, "Ron Wyatt is neither an archaeologist nor has he ever carried out a legally licensed excavation in Israel or Jerusalem." Sadly, Zias has been attacked by defenders of Wyatt who are more intent on "killing the messenger" than on validating the purported discoveries themselves.

- A stone walkway (much of it still intact) led from the Pool of Siloam in the south up to the Southern Stairs (painstakingly carved into the bedrock), then up through the gates in the southern wall, and finally onto the Temple Mount platform. This was the path pilgrims followed when approaching the Temple to present their offerings. They sang the Songs of Ascent (Psalm 120-134) as they made their way up the steps. Interestingly, this walkway bypasses Martin's proposed Temple site and proceeds north toward the Temple Mount.²⁸
- A Hebrew inscription etched in stone was found at the southwest corner of the Temple Mount directing visitors "to the place of trumpeting."²⁹ It is adjacent to the traditional Temple Mount but almost three-quarters of a mile from Martin's location.
- Another Hebrew inscription discovered at the southwestern corner of the Temple Mount paraphrases Isaiah 66:14: "When you see this, your heart shall rejoice . . ." The inscription dates from at least AD 300 and shows that locals only 230 years after the Temple's destruction believed it was located on the Temple Mount—not at Martin's location.³⁰



- Jewish people have gathered at the Western Wall with traceable continuity for 2,000 years to pray—not at Martin's location.³¹
- Anyone who's visited Jerusalem knows that as you stand on the Mount of Olives and face west (the vantage point of the Lord and His disciples in Matthew 24), you're looking directly across the Kidron Valley at the Temple Mount and the Muslim Dome of the Rock where the Temple once stood. Martin's site is farther south.
- The upper and lower aqueduct systems that brought large amounts of water to the Temple for purification rituals and for cleaning up blood from sacrifices all lead to the Temple Mount—not to Martin's location.³²
- Sams, Cornuke, and Martin all cite Josephus in their attempt to prove that the Antonia Fortress occupied the entire Temple Mount platform while the Temple

itself was situated farther down the hill in the City of David (also known as Zion). However, they quote him selectively. They overlook his statements about how the Romans had to destroy the Antonia Fortress (at the northwestern corner of the Temple Mount) so they could gain access to the Temple itself. The pertinent passage begins: "And now Titus gave orders to his soldiers that were with him to dig up the foundations of the tower of Antonia, and make him a ready passage for his army to come up." During the operation against the Fortress, Josephus even says the Romans sent in spies under cover of night, hoping to "find the guards of the Temple asleep."³³ It's clear, then, that the Antonia Fortress and the Temple were next door to each other. That's not true of Martin's location.³⁴

Conclusion

Does it matter where the ancient Temples were located? Yes, we believe it does. It has ramifications for (1) the right of the Jewish people to determine their own future, (2) the sovereignty of Israel over the Temple Mount, and (3) the rebuilding of the Temple someday.

The Western Wall in Jerusalem is the holiest site in Judaism, making the way it's regarded a microcosm, of sorts, of the broader Arab-Israeli conflict. The Palestinians insist that there was never a Jewish presence on the Temple Mount. They have appropriated *al-Haram al-Sharish* ("the Noble Sanctuary") for themselves to the exclusion of the Jews. The Palestinian Authority has even made it illegal for Jewish people to pray on the Temple Mount.

Racists and bigots argue that Jewish claims on the Temple Mount are part of a sinister Zionist conspiracy!³⁵ The Martin theory is based on half-baked pseudo-archaeology and only serves to stoke the fires of Replacement Theology and anti-Semitism that are spreading so widely in our world.

May God hasten the Day when David's prophecy about the Temple Mount will at last be fulfilled:

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 has not lifted up his soul to an idol, Nor sworn deceitfully. Lift up your heads, O you gates! Lift up, you everlasting doors! And the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The LORD of hosts, He [is] the King of glory (Psalm 24:3-4, 9-10).

For More Information

Pseudo-archaeology is a growing problem these days, with more books being published every year by untrained amateurs making ridiculous claims based on phony and/or flawed "evidence." Readers who are interested in legitimate archaeological work in the Middle East are invited to contact our friend Randall Price, Ph.D., at World of the Bible Ministries (worldofthebible.com).



*Dr. Gary Hedrick
is president of
CJF Ministries.*

¹⁴The Temple Mount is known in Hebrew as *Har HaBayit* or “Mount of the House [of God].” In Arabic, it’s called *Haram esh-Sharif* or “the Noble Sanctuary.”

²Most evangelical scholars count the 70 years of the Babylonian Captivity (Jer. 25:11-12) from 605 BC (when the first captives were taken to Babylon) to 536 BC (when work began on the Temple). Ezra 3:12 says that some of the older people who remembered the splendence of Solomon’s Temple wept when they first saw the simple and unadorned Temple of Zerubbabel. But this “second Temple” was later expanded and remodeled until the eventual Herodian Temple with its surrounding precincts rivaled the grandeur of Solomon’s Temple.

³Many historians refer to the time when the Herodian Temple was standing as “the Second Temple Period”—extending roughly from 530 BC to AD 70, when the Romans destroyed it.

⁴“Palestinians generally acknowledged that the *Beit Hamikdash* [i.e., the Jewish Temple] existed. A 1929 publication, *A Brief Guide to the Haram al-Sharif*, written by Waqf historian Aref al Aref, declares that the [Temple] Mount’s identity with the site of Solomon’s temple is beyond dispute. This too is the spot, according to universal belief, on which David built there an altar unto the Lord, and offered burnt and peace offerings.” (“What Is Beneath the Temple Mount?” by Joshua Hammer in *Smithsonian Magazine* [April 2011], 2).

⁵Some people dismiss the value of circumstantial evidence, even insisting that it’s not admissible in a court of law—but that’s not true. In criminal law, it is indeed admissible under most circumstances: “Circumstantial evidence is generally admissible in court unless the connection between the fact and the inference is too weak to be of help in deciding the case. Many convictions for various crimes have rested largely on circumstantial evidence.” (“Circumstances, Circumstantial Evidence” in *The Llectic Law Library* at lectlaw.com).

⁶See “Rewriting History: Erasing the Jewish Connection to Holy Sites and Creating a Fictitious Arab History” at camera.org (Dec. 29, 2016). CAMERA is an acronym for the Committee for Accuracy in Middle East Reporting in America.

⁷One such Islamic group that has opposed excavations on the Temple Mount is the northern branch of the Islamic Movement in Israel. It was accused of collaborating with Hamas and summarily outlawed by the Israeli government in 2015 (see “Israel Outlaws Northern Branch of Islamic Movement” by Isabel Kershner in *The New York Times* [Nov. 17, 2015] at nytimes.com).

⁸For information about the Temple Mount Sifting Project, see templamount.wordpress.com/brief-introduction-to-the-project.

⁹Per the Temple Mount Sifting Project blog (*ibid.*), “This sealing is the first ever evidence of ancient Hebrew writing from the Temple Mount and to the administrative activity which took place in the First Temple.”

¹⁰“Archaeology: Temple” by Robert Cornuke in *Personal Update News Journal* (Koinonia House Publishing, January 2015) at khouse.org.

¹¹The Messianic prophecy in Isaiah 66:8 proclaims, *Who has heard such a thing? Who has seen such things? Shall the earth be made to give birth in one day? [Or] shall a nation be born at once? For as soon as Zion was in labor, She gave birth to her children.*

¹²Per the Western Wall Heritage Foundation, the famous, underground Western Stone, forming part of the substructure of what is now the Western Wall, is one of the largest building blocks in the world. It’s 45 feet long, 10 feet high, 10 feet wide, and weighs an estimated 517 tons (english.thekotel.org). That’s well over a million pounds! It ranks among the largest objects ever moved by humans in ancient times.

¹³Ritmeyer (ritmeyer.com) says the highest point on the Temple Mount walls was the pinnacle (the Royal Stoa) at the southwestern corner, which was about 250 feet high. This may have been the point where the devil tried to tempt Yeshua to throw himself down (Matt. 4:5).

¹⁴See *In Search of the Mountain of God* by Bob Cornuke and David Halbrook (Nashville: B&H Publishing, 2000).

¹⁵The Temple Mount website can be accessed at templamount.org.

¹⁶The URL for this information is ldolphin.org/wyatt.html.

¹⁷Franz is a friend of our ministry and has taught courses in Israel for the Master’s College and Talbot Seminary.

¹⁸Martin was a marketing genius who convinced people that if they purchased his books, he would reveal things to them that others didn’t want them to know. In *Secrets of Golgotha: the Lost History of Jesus’ Crucifixion* (1988), for example, Martin attempted to prove that Yeshua was crucified on the Mount of Olives, rather than near the Garden Tomb or at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. A trained meteorologist, he also took an interest in astronomy and the biblical Star of Bethlehem, which he claimed was the Planet Jupiter (the “wandering star” of antiquity), and wrote about it in *The Birth of Christ Recalculated* (1978). He also penned *101 Bible Secrets That Christians Do Not Know* (1993), along with several other similar works. Most of his books were self-published.

¹⁹Mazar’s obituary in the *New York Times* reported: “A scholar of Jewish history in the biblical period and a former president of the Hebrew University, Professor Mazar was best known in Israel for directing large-scale excavations along the ancient western and southern walls of the area known to Jews as the Temple Mount in the Old City of Jerusalem. The decade-long dig near the Jewish shrine of the Western Wall was begun after Israel captured the Old City in the 1967 Arab-Israeli war. It yielded finds going back to the period of the First Temple in the seventh and eighth centuries B.C. Archeologists familiar with Professor Mazar’s work said he had founded a research discipline in Israel that used geography and archeology to trace the course of biblical history as told in the Jewish Scriptures and other ancient texts.”

²⁰For documentation about Ron Wyatt’s pseudo-archaeology, email Amanda McGuire-Moushon, Ph.D. candidate and administrative assistant at Andrews University’s Horn Archaeological Museum (hornmuseum@andrews.edu).

²¹Personal correspondence via email from Dr. Price to Gary Hedrick dated February 1, 2017.

²²Wikipedia provides this summary of Ritmeyer’s work: “He discovered archaeological evidence for the location of Solomon’s Temple, the emplacement of the Ark of the Covenant on the Foundation Stone, and the location of the platform as extended in the First Temple period, probably during the time of Hezekiah described as a square of 500 cubits in *Mishnah Middot* 2.1. He has demonstrated that one of the steps leading to the Dome of the Rock is actually the top of a remaining stone course of the pre-Herodian Western Wall of the Temple Mount platform” (excerpted from “Leen Ritmeyer” at wikipedia.com).

²³Salomon says that a unit of Syrian soldiers was advancing on his position at the Western Wall in 1967 and shooting at Israeli soldiers as they went. He was praying and preparing to meet his Maker when suddenly and inexplicably, the Syrian soldiers dropped their weapons and fled from the scene. According to Salomon, some of those soldiers later reported to UN officials that they had seen a large number of mysterious, angel-like figures surrounding an IDF officer at the Western Wall—and that vision was what sent the Syrians scrambling in full retreat. Salomon believes he was that IDF officer and that God sent the angels to protect him and his men (see “Leadership of the Temple Mount Faithful” at templamountfaithful.org).

²⁴Wyatt claimed to have discovered, among other things, Pharaoh’s chariot wheels in the Gulf of Aqaba, the Ark of the Covenant beneath Mount Calvary, Noah’s Ark (along with post-Flood housing and grave markers for Noah and his wife in eastern Turkey), the “true” Mount Sinai (in Saudi Arabia), complete with the golden calf altar at its base, the tower of Babel (in southern Turkey), and much more. None of these sensational discoveries was certified by a reputable archaeological authority. On the contrary, Israeli archaeologists, as well as evangelical scholars, overwhelmingly disavowed his work and claims. Gary Hedrick contacted Wyatt in the early 1990s when they were both in Jerusalem, but Wyatt refused to meet or offer any evidence of his claims about the Mount Calvary excavation. The Garden Tomb Association later issued a statement acknowledging that Wyatt had sunk a shaft somewhere on their property but stating that their personnel who had entered the tunnel saw none of the artifacts Wyatt claimed were there. Poorly-produced amateur videos later surfaced on YouTube purporting to show the Ark of the Covenant, but as anyone who’s familiar with staged special effects and computer generated imaging (CGI) can tell you, seeing isn’t always believing anymore!

²⁵“Ancient Temple Mount ‘warning’ stone is the ‘closest thing we have to the Temple’” by Ilan Ben Zion in *The Times of Israel*, Oct. 22, 2015 (timesofisrael.com).

²⁶“On the Location of the First and Second Temples” by Lambert Dolphin and Michael Kollen, on the Temple Mount website (templamount.org/theories.html).

²⁷It’s true that the Gihon Springs are used occasionally even to this day as a sort of mikveh; however, the springs couldn’t have serviced the thousands of Israelites who visited the Temple daily during *Sukkot* (Tabernacles), *Pesach* (Passover), and *Shavuot* (Pentecost), the three pilgrim festivals. That’s why they installed dozens of *mikvot* in the area at the base of the southwest corner of the Temple Mount—and hundreds more at various sites around Jerusalem. Some evangelical scholars believe these facilities may have been used by the apostles to baptize the thousands of people in Jerusalem who were coming to faith in Yeshua after His Resurrection (Acts 2:38-41). It handles the logistical problem of baptizing so many people in such a short time.

²⁸*Alexander to Constantine: Archaeology of the Land of the Bible, Volume 3* by Eric Meyers and Mark Chancey (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2012), 132.

²⁹*Walking in the Footsteps of Jesus* by Wayne Stiles (Grand Rapids: Revell, 2008), 108.

³⁰*Ibid.*

³¹“However, the truth is that a Jewish presence on the Temple Mount actually continued throughout history. In fact, when Beitar, the last Jewish fortress town of the Bar Kochba rebellion fell in 135 CE, the Romans did not object to the continued worship of local gods, and did not prevent Jews returning to worship on the Temple Mount, the site where the Temple had stood only a few years earlier. And Jews did ascend, as we know from numerous Talmudic accounts” (“Unbroken Chain: the Historical Jewish Presence on the Temple Mount” by Judaica in *Jerusalem Post* [January 21, 2015] at jpost.com).

³²“The source of the water was about 15 miles south of Jerusalem, on the other side of Bethlehem, where spring water is collected in three large pools called, incorrectly, Solomon’s Pools. From there water flows north through a channel, which can still be easily traced, directly to the Temple Mount for priestly use. Not a single tributary channel leads off the main channel; every drop was reserved for priestly use on the Temple Mount. This gives some idea of the enormous amount of activity that occurred on the Temple Mount at that time” (“Jerusalem Down Under: Tunneling Along Herod’s Temple Mount Wall,” Dan Bahat in *Biblical Archaeology Review*, 21:06, Nov./Dec. 1995). See also Amihai Mazar, “The Aqueducts of Jerusalem,” in Yigael Yadin, *Jerusalem Revealed* (Jerusalem Exploration Society, 1975), 79-84.

³³See *Josephus: Of the War*, Book 6, Chapter 2, paragraphs 1, 6, and 7 (penelope.uchicago.edu).

³⁴We gleaned and adapted some of this information from a detailed review of the Cornuke book by “Theophilus” at Amazon.com.

³⁵Read the “comments” section on YouTube where people are discussing the Martin theory and you’ll find the replacement theologians and anti-Semites using it as fodder in their attacks on the Jewish State. For example, see youtube.com/watch?v=fgWXCw69S34.

Bible Questions AND Answers

by DR. GARY HEDRICK

Have a Bible question?

Submit it to Dr. Hedrick at garyh@cjfm.org, or mail it to 611 Broadway, San Antonio, Texas 78215.

You may see your question addressed in a future issue of *Messianic Perspectives*.

QUESTION: *I noticed in your wonderful interview with Janet Willis that you both take the Millennium literally. I'm sympathetic, but isn't there a problem with Micah 4:5, which says (if we take it literally) that during the Millennium the nations will worship gods other than the God of the Jews? Do you really believe that religious pluralism will be the policy during the earthly reign of the Messiah? You always say "context is everything" and the context in Micah 4 is clearly the Messianic Kingdom.*

ANSWER: Yes, that's the context. Micah 4 is describing aspects of the LORD's thousand-year reign. Verse 3 declares, *He shall judge between many peoples, And rebuke strong nations afar off; They shall beat their swords into plowshares, And their spears into pruning hooks; Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, Neither shall they learn war anymore.* You can't get any more Messianic-prophetic than that!

You're right—religious pluralism would be incompatible with the Messiah's earthly reign. The LORD is tolerant and even "pluralistic" (in a certain sense) about many things. All we have to do is look around us at the almost infinite diversity and variety in nature and it becomes immediately apparent that our Creator relishes the things that make us different: *vive la différence*, as our French friends say. The hundreds of human cultures that have developed worldwide over many thousands of years won't disappear at the dawn of the Millennium.

But religious pluralism or inclusivism is a horse of a different color because it's based on the mistaken presumption

that all religious views are equally valid. It ignores the reality of religious error. Moses repeatedly distinguishes between the true God of Israel and the false gods of the nations (e.g., Deut. 4:27-29). The LORD is "jealous" (Ex. 20:5) because He wants us to know Him. He doesn't want anyone worshiping false deities that don't really exist. In the NT, the Apostle Paul confirmed this when he declared that man-made gods are "no gods at all" (Acts 19:26 NIV) and Peter agreed when he said, "There is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12b).

If Micah 4:5 actually said what you say it says, it would indeed be a problem. But it doesn't. Look at it carefully: *For all people walk in the name of his god, But we will walk in the name of the LORD our God Forever and ever.* This "for-but" formula is characteristic of Hebrew parallelism. It's used to contrast or compare one thing with another.

Two forms of the Hebrew word *halach* ("walk") are employed in this verse to express two different aspects of action—one present and the other future. The verse is best understood like this: "For now, all people are walking (present aspect) in the name of his god, But the time is coming when we will walk (future aspect) in the name of the LORD our God forever and ever."

The meaning, then, is clear and the answer to your question is no. Micah 4:5 doesn't establish religious pluralism as a characteristic of the Lord's future Millennial reign. 🕊

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Fruit from the Harvest

by Violette Berger



With all the negative events taking place on college campuses nationwide, we are sharing some positive ones from CJFM workers ministering on college campuses.

UNLV Campus Outreach

Richard Hill, CJFM representative (Las Vegas) and pastor of Beth Yeshua Messianic Congregation, praises the Lord for a blessed year of ministry on the University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV) campus. He and his team passed out 12,000 tracts and videos to the students of UNLV. They shared the Gospel and led many to the Lord. Richard also preached “open air,” using a small megaphone so that all the students could hear the message of Jesus. During the past semester, Richard met JayJay, a new Christian friend who is majoring in videography. He followed their team around campus videotaping their evangelistic encounters. JayJay’s goal was to show the truth behind why Christians are ministering on campus. Rich writes: “Some scoffers believe we had bad intentions, and he wanted to set the record straight.” The final edited copy will soon be available for viewing on the Internet. Rich asks: *“Please pray that UNLV will not change the area known as the ‘free speech zone’ to a less traveled section on campus. If they do, it could dramatically affect our ministry to the students and teachers of UNLV.”*

OSU Campus Outreach

CJFM representative, Eric Chabot (Columbus, OH) writes: “As I reflect on some of the students God has brought into my path at Ohio State University (OSU), I am overwhelmed with gratitude. It is always rewarding to see their spiritual journey not only while they are on campus, but also after they graduate. Some of the people God has given me the opportunity to lead to the Lord, disciple, or mentor, are making a huge difference in academia, as well as in fields such as engineering. Also, some of them are very involved in their local congregations. Most of them are committed to their faith and are going forward in their relationship with Jesus. One of our newest students also committed to participating in campus evangelism with us during this past summer. He even reached out to many other religious groups on the campus. He said that he has grown so much through this experience. I am very thankful that God has allowed me to play a small role in the spiritual journey of these individuals.”

T’vilah

Pastor Yossi, Kehilat Haderech (The Way) Messianic Congregation (Israel) baptized three members of his

congregation on the first Shabbat of December. *T’vilah* is the Hebrew word for “water baptism” (immersion bath). One of the members was a new member and from an ultra-Orthodox background. The other two were teenaged boys, sons of established members. Pastor Yossi shares the reaction of the families and the congregation: “The baptism service brought much joy and excitement to the congregation and especially to the families of those being baptized. We thank God for the dedicated hearts of those baptized and their passion for drawing near to the living God—and for publicly proclaiming their faith in Him to others. After the baptisms, two other members came to us and asked to be baptized—and another new member asked to pray with us to receive the Lord into her life.”

And Jesus . . . spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age. Amen” (Matt. 28:18-20).

From Israel with Love

Ruth Nessim, CJFM representative (Israel) shared about her trip to England and Northern Ireland: “I took a number of meetings, stayed in many homes, and met many different and wonderful people. The highlight of my trip was reuniting with the 96- and 93-year-old Anglican vicar and his wife who prayed me into salvation when I was almost 14 years old. I did not know then that the vicar’s wife is Jewish! God bless them both!” (And how blessed they must have been to learn of the life-long ministry God called that young Jewish girl to!)

Meanwhile, back in Israel, Ruth continues to meet with people at her home and also continues with her follow-up visits. She recently received a message from “A,” an unsaved Arab friend she stays in touch with. She shares the note: “The Arabic says, ‘Bahebek, mama,’ which in English translates, ‘I love you, mother.’ Please keep praying for this former terror-cell member that he will truly follow the Lord. He is also still very sick, and it is not possible at present to visit because of the current situation. Pray, also, for ‘S,’ my friend of 40 years who is 93 years old (and now lives in the USA) and is no stranger to the Gospel, and for Lily, 86, as both struggle with old age and are not believers.”

“So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return to Me void, But it shall accomplish what I please, And it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it” (Isaiah 55:11).

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