

**This is study section 15 in the course, The Life of Christ: Harmony of the Gospels**

## **The Temple in Jerusalem**

In 20 BC, King Herod began renovating the old Temple that had been built in the sixth century BC following the return of the Jewish exiles from Babylon. It was the most ambitious building project of his life. He undertook expanding the Hasmonean Temple Mount by extending it on three sides, to the north, west, and south. It took him 46 years to build and remodel this magnificent structure. When Jesus arrived on the scene in Jerusalem, this is the temple he preached in and cleansed. While He was there, He predicted that the temple would be destroyed in the future, and that not ONE STONE of the magnificent structure would remain on top of another stone...that it would be utterly destroyed...even to the foundation stones.

In 70 AD, Titus sacked Jerusalem and totally destroyed the temple and murdered thousands of Jewish people in the city. His soldiers went on a frenzy, and burned the structure, then demolished it down to the very foundation. Josephus Flavius, who witnessed the entire episode, wrote about the destruction of the temple in his books, *Jewish Antiquities* and *the Jewish War*. He wrote a detailed description of the entire event and validated Jesus's prediction that the temple was totally destroyed, and every stone was displaced.

For 1,950 years the Jews have not had a temple in which to worship the Yahweh. But the temple is referenced in prophecy as a building that will be used as a part of the Jewish worship in Israel. For the end times to come, a temple must be built. Let's investigate these things...

### **15.3 The Rebuilding of the Temple in Jerusalem**

In Israel's long history, there have been two temples built in Jerusalem as a place of sacrifice and worship to the Lord. The first was constructed by Solomon in the 10<sup>th</sup> century BC. It was a magnificent temple in which no expense was spared. Much of what Solomon used to construct the temple was gathered by Solomon's father, David. Solomon's temple was destroyed by the Babylonians in 586 BC. Seventy years later, a number of Jews returned to Israel by command of Cyrus and a second temple was built on the same site. During the first century BC, Herod, the Roman appointed head of Judea, modified that temple, enlarging and expanding the Temple to be one of the greatest buildings in the empire. This second temple was destroyed by the Romans in 70 AD. Jesus predicted its destruction in Luke 21:5-6:

*Then, as some spoke of the temple, how it was <sup>[a]</sup>adorned with beautiful stones and donations, He said, <sup>6</sup> "These things which you see—the days will come in which not one stone shall be left upon another that shall not be thrown down."*

### **Daniel foretold the destruction of the city of Jerusalem and the temple.**

*Daniel 9:26b (NIV84) The people of the ruler who will come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end will come like a flood: War will continue until the end, and desolations have been decreed.*

Daniel is then told that the city of Jerusalem and the temple would be destroyed yet another time. Daniel was looking forward to his people being able to go back to rebuild the temple and the city of Jerusalem. And God would enable them to do so. But before the earthly kingdom would begin Jerusalem would again be destroyed.

This time it would be destroyed by the Romans (“the people of the prince who is to come”). This “prince who is to come” has already been identified previously in the book of Daniel as coming from the fourth empire (Rome) and as being defeated at the Second coming of Christ.

Flavius Josephus, a historian living during the destruction of Jerusalem and remarked in his writings that the temple was utterly and totally destroyed. Ray C. Stedman commented on Josephus’s description:

When at last the walls were breached Titus tried to preserve the Temple by giving orders to his soldiers not to destroy or burn it. But the anger of the soldiers against the Jews was so intense that, maddened by the resistance they encountered, they disobeyed the order of their general and set fire to the Temple. There were great quantities of gold and silver there which had been placed in the Temple for safekeeping. This melted and ran down between the rocks and into the cracks of the stones. When the soldiers captured the Temple area, in their greed to obtain this gold and silver they took long bars and pried apart the massive stones. Thus, quite literally, not one stone was left standing upon another.<sup>1</sup>

Thus, Jesus’s prediction came true. Not one stone remained of the 2<sup>nd</sup> temple!

Those who believe Scripture contains a literal fulfillment of the biblical covenants for the Jewish people and the Land of Israel recognize rebuilding the Temple is part of this promised future. In Jeremiah’s presentation of the New Covenant for Israel, we read:

**Jeremiah 33:14–18, NASB** *Behold, days are coming,’ declares the LORD, ‘when I will fulfill the good word which I have spoken concerning the house of Israel and the house of Judah. In those days and at that time I will cause a righteous Branch of David to spring forth; and He shall execute justice and righteousness on the earth. In those days Judah shall be saved, and Jerusalem shall dwell in safety; and this is the name by which she shall be called: the LORD is our righteousness.’ For thus says the LORD, ‘David shall never lack a man to sit on the throne of the house of Israel; and the Levitical priests shall never lack a man before Me to offer burnt offerings, to burn grain offerings, and to prepare sacrifices continually.*

This passage speaks about the Messianic Age when all Israel will be saved and restored to the Land of Israel. At that time, a righteous descendant of David, the Messiah, will sit on the throne in Jerusalem, and the Temple will again stand complete with its Levitical priesthood. If this is to be a future reality, is there any sign of preparation for a third Temple in Israel today?

The Bible says in the book of Revelation that the apostle John was to measure the size of the future temple. The Revelation talks about the temple existing in Jerusalem during the time of the Antichrist where he will defile it. So, it must be in existence sometime before this decertation occurring in the middle of the Tribulation period.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.templemount.org/destroy2.html>

Matthew 24:15 describes the “abomination of desolation” as described by Daniel the prophet will take place in the temple building in Jerusalem. 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12, foretells of a "son of perdition", a world ruler, will desecrate the temple just as Antiochus Epiphanes did in 168 BC. Notice verses 3-4: "Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day [of Christ's return] will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the **temple of God**, showing himself that he is God" (emphasis added).

According to these passages, within 3 ½ years into the Tribulation period, the Temple will be rebuilt and fully functional in Jerusalem. Since that is the case, is there any current effort to rebuild a third Temple, and if so, what is the progress?

After Israel’s stunning victory over the Arab armies during the Six-Day War in June 1967, Israeli defense minister General Moshe Dayan went to the Al Aqsa Mosque to meet with five leaders of the Supreme Muslim Religious Order. That council exercised control over the Temple Mount for nearly the 20 years of Jordanian control of the Temple Mount. Dayan, a non-religious Jew, gave control of the Temple Mount to the council in an attempt to show “good faith.” Jews and Christians since then are permitted limited access to the Temple Mount area, but prayer is forbidden. Only Muslims can enter the Dome of the Rock and worship on the Temple Mount.

Jews today believe that their Messiah will not return until the Temple is constructed on the Mount. There is a large movement within Israel to rebuild the temple.

**CHECK THIS OUT!**

<http://www.templemountfaithful.org>. You can watch a 34-minute video on their efforts to rebuild the temple in the next few years. They already have the cornerstones hauled closely to the site.

**The first problem to rebuilding the third Temple is its location.**

If you tour Israel today, you will find an almost square 36-acre wall built around what is said to be the temple mount of the second temple on top of Mt. Moriah. On it lie the Dome of the Rock and Al Aqsa Mosque controlled by the Muslim authorities. The Dome of the Rock is the 3<sup>rd</sup> most revered holy site among the 1.8 billion Muslims today. It probably is the most contested and the most valuable piece of property in the entire world.

If you go to the Israel Museum you will see a model of Jerusalem during the time of Christ. The temple Mount looks like this:



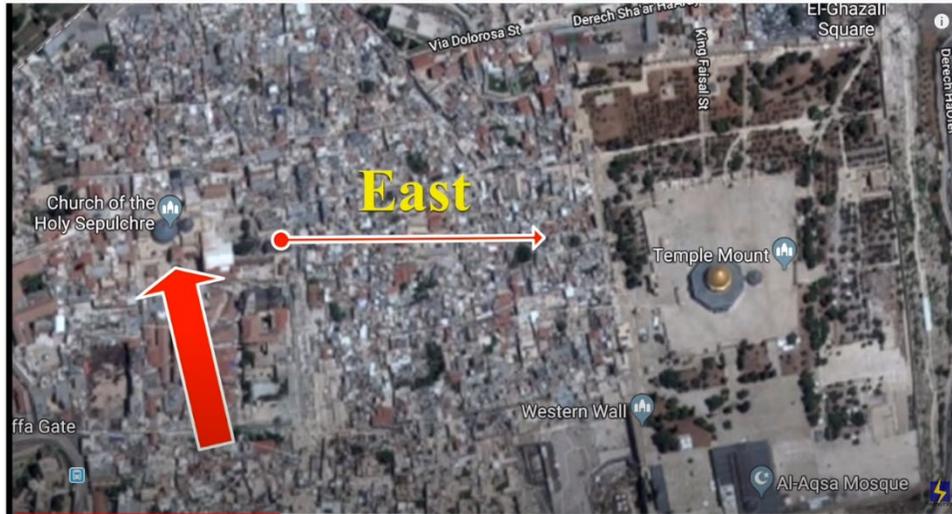
The Temple is in the middle of the sizable square structure (about 36 acres) with Fort Antonia located to the upper right or northwestern side of the Temple, attached to the temple walls. Fort Antonia occupies about three acres of this picture.

However, Jewish scholars do not agree on the exact location of where the past temples stood. One view is that the temple stood where the Muslim Dome of the Rock stands right now. They are longing for that mosque to be destroyed but seeing that the Dome of the Rock is the third most revered site in Islam, that problem may never happen. There is NO WAY that Israel can rebuild the temple on this location without starting World War III!

Another view is that the site is north of the Dome of the Rock where there is a large open plaza today. If that is the case, they could build a structure quickly without touching any of the Muslim buildings on that hill. However, that is highly unlikely since Jews are not allowed on the Temple Mount today, and it would be doubtful that Muslims who control the Temple Mount would “share” the site with a Jewish Temple building a few feet away to the north on the same mount.

A third view is that the site is south of the Dome of the Rock. Let’s investigate this interesting view as it may pave the pathway for a temple to be built in Jerusalem without upsetting the Muslim world.

According to the historian, Josephus (37AD – 100AD), Fort Antonia housed the 10<sup>th</sup> Roman legion or about 6,000 soldiers plus about 4,000 people who supported the soldiers. In actuality, the fort in the model above could house only about 600 soldiers. So, the model is obviously incorrect. Something is wrong.



In 333 AD, there was an anonymous pilgrim called the Pilgrim of Bordeaux who traveled to Jerusalem. He wrote that he looked EAST from the site where the Church of the Holy Sepulcher would be built and all he could see was the old Roman fort.<sup>2</sup> This was 350 years BEFORE the Dome of the Rock was built, which was completed in 691 AD.

He identified what is called the Temple Mount today as Fort Antonia. If you go to Jerusalem today, you will see Jews worshipping Jehovah at the Western Wall, located by the blue arrow in the picture. Jews believe that this is what remains of the western wall of Herod's temple. However, this is probably the western wall of Fort Antonia.



<sup>2</sup> <http://andrewjacobs.org/translations/bordeaux.html>

According to Eusebius, a 3<sup>rd</sup> century historian, said, “The hill called Zion and Jerusalem, the building there, that is to say, the temple, has been utterly removed or shaken.”<sup>3</sup> This means completely destroyed or utterly gone. As Christ prophesized in Matthew 24:2, Luke 21, and Mark 13:1-2, **“Not one stone shall be left upon another that shall not be thrown down.”** Josephus said, “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 been inhabited.”<sup>4</sup> Eleazer Ben Jair, the Jewish commander at Masada, wrote “It (Jerusalem) is now demolished to the very foundations, and hath nothing left but that monument of it preserved, I mean the camps of those Romans that hath destroyed it, which still dwells upon its ruins.”<sup>5</sup> This commander, who was an eyewitness to these events, said that Jerusalem and the temple were gone, but the Roman fort was still there. It appears that the square walls of the temple mount today are really where the Roman Fort Antonia was.

Fort Antonia had been a Roman fortress since AD 6. With its 60-foot walls, 37 cisterns, and special aqueduct to supply it with water, the Fort was a valuable resource which Titus decided to preserve as home to the Roman Tenth Legion. The Fort was located on what is now referred to as the “Temple Mount.” According to Dr. Earnest Martin, the fact that every Jewish structure, wall, and foundation in the city of Jerusalem were destroyed – including the Temple – is powerful evidence that the Jewish Temple was not at this site.<sup>6</sup>



So where was the temple built in ancient Jerusalem? Josephus references that the temple was built about 600 feet south of Fort Antonia and was connected by a double causeway with the fort on the higher ground. It would look something like the picture to the left.

Josephus said, “Now as to the Tower of Antonia, it might seem to be composed of several cities.” He also said, “For if we go up to this Tower of Antonia, we gain the city since we shall then be upon the top of the hill.”<sup>7</sup>

Josephus’s description of the Temple Mount in relation to Fort Antonia is more pictured



<sup>3</sup> [http://www.tertullian.org/fathers/eusebius\\_de\\_10\\_book8.htm](http://www.tertullian.org/fathers/eusebius_de_10_book8.htm)

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.eyewitnesstohistory.com/jewishtemple.htm>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.netours.com/content/view/27/29/>

<sup>6</sup> *The Temples that Jerusalem Forgot*, 2000

<sup>7</sup> [https://madainproject.com/antonia\\_fortress\\_according\\_to\\_josephus](https://madainproject.com/antonia_fortress_according_to_josephus)

by the artist drawing to the right on the previous page. Remember Josephus was alive at the time of his observations and wrote down what he actually saw!

In Acts 21:31-32 Luke describes an event that happened to Paul in Jerusalem at the Temple. *“Now they were seeking to kill him, news came to the commander of the garrison that all Jerusalem was in an uproar. He immediately took soldiers and centurions and **ran down** to them. And when they saw the commander and the soldiers, they stopped beating Paul. **The Fort was on higher ground!**”*

Acts 21:35 continues the story. *“When he reached the stairs, he had to be carried by the soldiers because of the violence of the mob.”* Acts 21:40, *“So when he had given him permission, Paul stood on the stairs and motioned with his hand to the people.”* Notice the stairs in the above picture to the entrance of the Fort (blue arrow). Those stairs exist today in ruins at the “Temple Mount.” The model at the Israel Museum has the small fort connected to the temple with no stairs. This picture is not supported by the facts of the story in Acts.

Acts 23:23 says, *“And he called for two centurions, saying, ‘Prepare two hundred soldiers, seventy horsemen, and two hundred spearmen to go to Caesarea at the third hour of the night.’”* The commander sent 470 soldiers to bring Paul to Caesarea Maritima. If the Fort only held 600 soldiers, as is possible in the Museum model, then the commander planned to keep peace in Jerusalem with the 130 remaining. That is NOT LIKELY!



It is interesting that most all Roman forts built during the time of Christ were all almost the exact size of the temple mount, about 36 acres. Pictured



to the left is the remains of an old Roman fort in Masada which is clearly visible from the top of the mountain. Pictured to the right is an artist version of all typical Roman Forts built in the Roman Empire which would house a legion of soldiers. Both are about 36 acres.



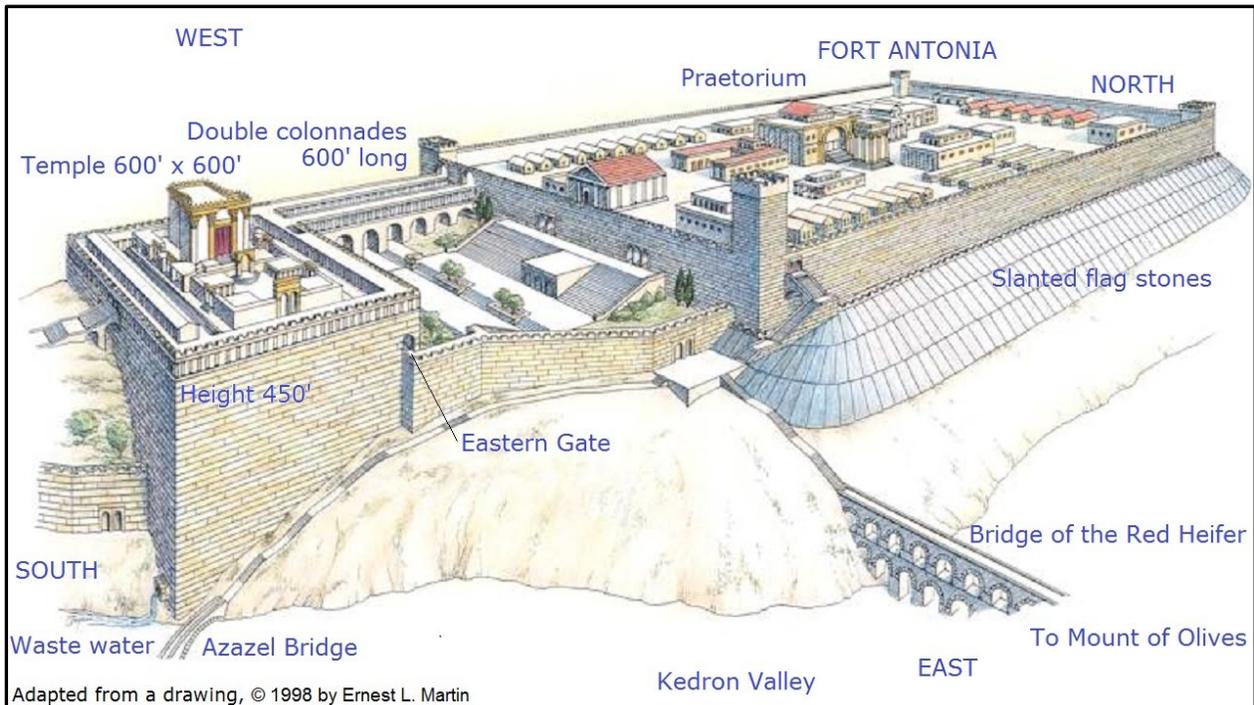
So, if the current temple mount was not the location of Herod's temple, where was the temple during Christ's day? It was probably built over the location of the Gihon Spring because of the requirement for a tremendous amount of water needed for temple sacrifices. It was built in the City of David. The Gihon Spring is the ONLY water source for the entire area!

If all this is true, then there is really no problem with the reconstruction of the temple on the actual site of Solomon's temple. Once archeologists discover some

artifact that reveals the real site of the original temple, Israel can begin construction immediately. There is no holy building located at the Gihon Springs, only a tourist building and a few apartment buildings. If you see the temple under construction in your day, look up, for your redemption is near!

Below is an artist conception of what the Temple Mount may have looked like in Jesus's day.

You will recall that during the temptation of Christ, Satan took Jesus to the pinnacle of the temple and told Him to cast himself down. This was probably on the southeastern corner of the Temple facing the Kidron Valley. This current corner of today's "temple Mount" is probably no more than 100 feet high. But we know that the height of temptation was much greater. Notice that if the temple was over the Gihon Spring, the southeast corner is 450 feet high -- A much greater temptation for Christ!

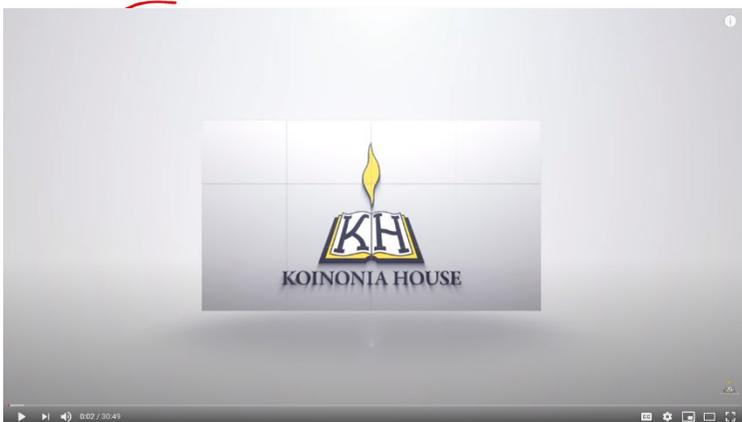


To see the latest archeologists discoveries of where Solomon's temple was located, watch the following videos on YouTube:

**CHECK THIS OUT!** *Bob Cornuke's Temple Mount Discovery*



**CHECK THIS OUT!** *The Temple*



CHECK THIS OUT! *Third Jewish Temple Will Be Rebuilt! Fulfilling Bible Prophecy*



CHECK THIS OUT! Read further about this from this website:  
<https://truthinscripture.net/2017/09/28/where-was-herods-temple-eyewitness-accounts/#:~:text=It%20is%20now%20demolished%20to,to%20ashes%5D%2C%20and%20a%20few>