

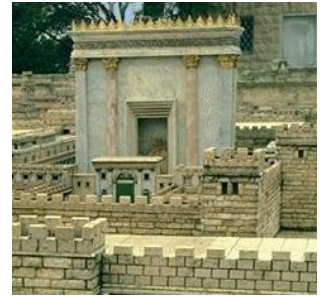
# THE ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION AND THE 70 WEEKS PROPHECY

In relation to the first major battle of the Great Tribulation (Europe conquering the Middle East) are a couple of specific prophecies referred to as the Abomination of Desolation and the 70 weeks prophecy.

## The Abomination of Desolation

In [Matthew 24](#) Jesus Christ gave a long prophecy detailing events that would occur leading up to His return. In this chapter he spoke of something called the abomination of desolation. He said:

“Then Jesus went out and departed from the temple, and His disciples came up to show Him the buildings of the temple. And Jesus said to them, ‘Do you not see all these things? Assuredly, I say to you, not *one* stone shall be left here upon another, that shall not be thrown down.’ Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, ‘Tell us, when will these things be? And what *will be* the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?’...”



“Therefore when you see the ‘abomination of desolation,’ spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (whoever reads, let him understand), then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. Let him who is on the housetop not go down to take anything out of his house. And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes. But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! And pray that your flight may not be in winter or on the Sabbath. For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be” ([Matthew 24:1-3, 15-22](#)).

The prophecies that He spoke were dual and answered two different questions that the disciples had asked Him. The first question was “When will these things be?”, referring to the destruction of the temple where one stone would not be left on top of one another. This occurred in **70 AD** when the Romans destroyed the city of Jerusalem and the Temple that was standing in Jesus’ day. The second question was “What *will be* the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?” The disciples expected the Kingdom of God would come in their lifetime.

Jesus spoke of “the ‘abomination of desolation,’ spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place”. We read of this in [Daniel 11:31](#): “And forces shall be mustered by him, and they shall defile the sanctuary fortress; then they shall take away the daily *sacrifices*, and place *there* the abomination of desolation.”

According to the UCG booklet [“Is the Bible True?”](#):

“This refers to the momentous events of **Dec. 16, 168 B.C.**, when a crazed [Antiochus Epiphanes – Greek ruler of Syria] entered Jerusalem and killed 80 000 men, women and children (2 Maccabees 5:11-14). He then desecrated the temple by offering a sacrifice [swine or pig flesh] to a pagan god, Jupiter Olympus. This outrage was a forerunner of a comparable event that Jesus Christ said would occur in the last days ([Matthew 24:15](#))”.

Josephus wrote the following in Antiquities of the Jews (Book 12, Chapter 5, Verse 4):

“And when the king had **built an idol altar upon God’s altar**, he slew swine upon it, and so offered a sacrifice neither according to the law, nor the Jewish religious worship in that country. He also compelled them to forsake the worship which they paid their own God.”

1 Maccabees 1:54 called the idol of Zeus “**a desolating sacrilege on the altar.**”

**Daniel 11:31** says that:

- 1] The sanctuary is defiled
- 2] The daily sacrifice taken away and
- 3] Placed there is the abomination of desolation.

In the days of Antiochus Epiphanes after the Temple was defiled and the daily sacrifices were taken away it was an idol of Zeus that was placed or set up there. The idol that was set up is what is referred to as the abomination NOT the forces or army that caused destruction to the Temple and Jerusalem. Josephus tells us the following:

"He [Antiochus] also spoiled the temple, and put a stop to the constant practice of offering a daily sacrifice of expiation for **3 years and 6 months**" (Wars of the Jews, Book 1, Chapter 1, Verse 1).

This 3 years and 6 months equates to about 1270 days and is the time that the daily sacrifices were stopped for. This period differs from the 1290 days noted in **Daniel 12:11** in relation to the stopping of sacrifices and the setting up of the abomination of desolation.

Another "abomination of desolation" appears to have occurred in **70 AD** when the Romans destroyed Jerusalem and the Temple that stood in Jesus' day.

In Wars of the Jews (Book 6, Chapter 6, Verse 1) Josephus records: "And now the Romans, upon the flight of the seditious into the city, and upon the burning of the holy house itself, and of all the buildings round about it, **brought their ensigns to the temple and set them over against its eastern gate; and there did they offer sacrifices to them**".

We will shortly look closely at Daniel's prophecies relating to the abomination of desolation. They appear to indicate that there will be another end-time fulfillment as well.

That said, Jesus does appear to be specifically referring to the destruction of Jerusalem in **70 AD** when He speaks of the abomination of desolation. Jesus says in **Matthew 24:15-18**: "Therefore when you see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place (whoever reads, let him understand). **Then** let those in Judea flee into the mountains. Let him on the housetop not come down to take anything out of his house; nor let him in the field turn back to take his clothes."

By the use of the word **then** Jesus connects the abomination He is specifically referring to with the flight of people in Judea. In the parallel account in Luke speaking of the same events where He tells people to flee we read: "And when you see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that **its destruction** has come. And let those in Judea flee to the mountains. And those in its midst, let them go out. And those in the open spaces, let them not go into her."

**Jesus is not referring to an end-time abomination of desolation here as He speaks of Jerusalem's destruction. In the Great Tribulation Jerusalem would be taken captive NOT destroyed (Revelation 11:2).**

What evidence do we have for an end-time fulfillment of the prophecies relating to the abomination of desolation?

The first place that the abomination of desolation is mentioned is in **Daniel 8**.

"And as I was watching, behold, a he-goat came from the west, over the face of the all earth, and did not touch the ground. And the he goat had an outstanding horn between his eyes...Then the he-goat became very great. And when he was strong, the great horn was broken. And in its place came up four outstanding ones towards the four winds of the heavens.

"And out of one of them came forth a little horn, which became very great, toward the south and toward the east and toward the bountiful land. And it became great, even to the host of heaven. And it made fall some of the host and of the stars to the ground, and trampled them.

“Yes, he magnified himself, even to the ruler of the host, **and the daily sacrifice was taken away by him, and the place of his sanctuary was cast down.** And an army was given to him against the daily sacrifice because of transgression, and it cast the truth to the ground. And it worked and succeeded.

“Then I heard a certain holy one speaking, and another holy one said to that one who spoke, Until when shall the vision last, concerning the daily sacrifice and the transgression that astounds, to give both the sanctuary and the host to be trampled? And he said to me, For 2 300 evenings and mornings. Then the sanctuary shall be cleansed...

“The he goat is the king of Greece. And the great horn between his eyes is the first king. And as for that being broken, and four stood up in its place; four kingdoms shall stand up out of the nation, but not in its power.

“And in **the latter time of their kingdom**, when the transgressors have come to the full, a king, fierce of face, and skilled at intrigues, shall stand up. And his power shall be mighty, but not by his own power. And he shall destroy marvelously, and shall prosper and work, and destroy the mighty and the holy people. And also through his understanding, he shall cause deceit to succeed in his hand.

“And he shall magnify himself in his heart, and by peace shall destroy many. **He also shall stand up against the Prince of princes. But he shall be broken without a hand**” (Daniel 8:5, 8-14, 22-25).

The he goat is the king of Greece and the great horn is its first king, Alexander the Great. After his premature death the kingdom was split between his 4 generals.

A little horn then follows and it is he that causes the daily sacrifice to be taken away and place of the sanctuary to be cast down. The latter time of their kingdom appears to indicate late in the Greek empire that controlled the land of Israel right up until the time of Antiochus Epiphanes who stopped the daily sacrifices and set up an idol of Zeus in the Temple in **168 BC**. The Maccabees then drove out the Greeks 3 ½ years later and cleansed the Temple, an event celebrated as Hannukah by the Jews today.

It seems a simple matter to interpret this prophecy of the daily sacrifice as just referring to the abomination of desolation in the days of Antiochus Epiphanes.

That said, there is a very strong indication that the prophecy is dual because of what it says in **Daniel 8:25** – “**He also shall stand up against the Prince of princes. But he shall be broken without a hand.**”

2 Maccabees 9:5-7 says the following about the death Antiochus Epiphanes: “**But the all-seeing Lord, the God of Israel, struck him an incurable and unseen blow.** As soon as he ceased speaking he was seized with a pain in his bowels for which there was no relief and with sharp internal tortures - and that very justly, for he had tortured the bowels of others with many and strange inflictions. Yet he did not in any way stop his insolence, but was even more filled with arrogance, breathing fire in his rage against the Jews, and giving orders to hasten the journey. And so it came about that he fell out of his chariot as it was rushing along, and the fall was so hard as to torture every limb of his body.”

The manner in which Antiochus Epiphanes died matches the prophecy of **Daniel 8:25** of being broken without a hand from anyone else. The part where it says he also shall stand up against the Princes of princes could possibly be metaphorical of his defiance against God and His people or it could be literal.

If this is referring to a literal stand against the Prince of Princes (Jesus Christ) then it can only be an end-time event when Jesus Christ will return to this earth. It doesn't appear to refer to the events of **70 AD** when the Romans destroyed Jerusalem as General Titus later went on to become emperor.

**Daniel 8:13-14** says: “Until when shall the vision last, concerning the daily sacrifice and the transgression that astounds, to give both the sanctuary and the host to be trampled? And he said to me, For 2 300 evenings and mornings. Then the sanctuary shall be cleansed.”

That number of 2300 evenings and mornings is usually believed to be a reference to the evening and morning sacrifices of which there were 2 each day. This would be 1150 days, as opposed to 2300 days if

so. What is this period referring to which differs from other periods of 1290 and 1335 days also mentioned later in the book of Daniel?

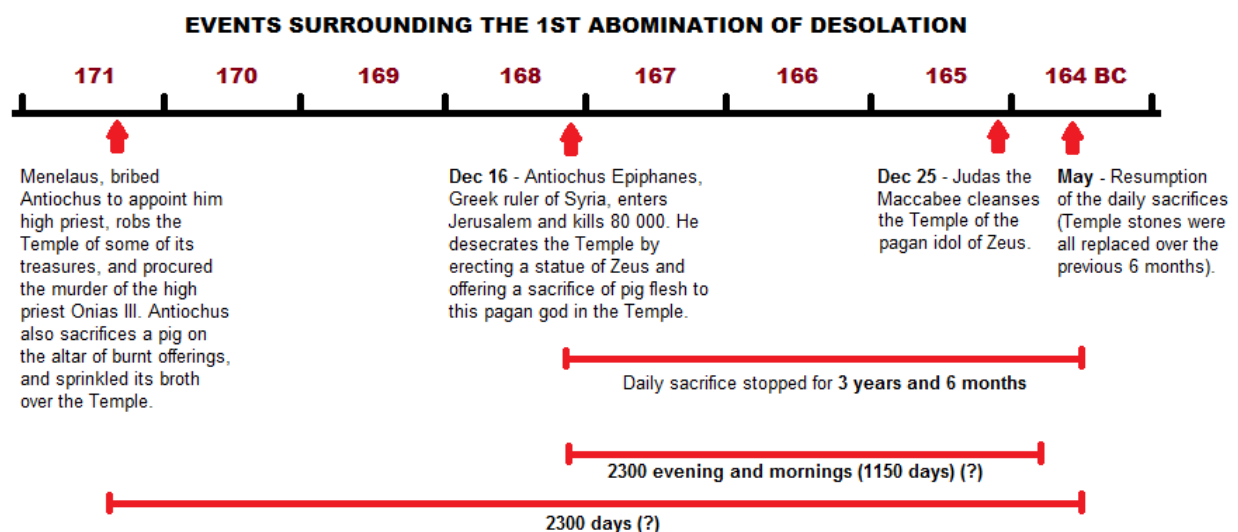
The Expositor's Bible makes these comments on the events that appear to have fulfilled the prophecy of the 2300 evenings and mornings:

"Turning now to the dates, we know that Judas the Maccabee cleansed (1 Mac 4:41-56, 2 Mac 10:1-5) ('justified' or 'vindicated', [Dan 8:14](#)) the Temple on Kislev 25 (**December 25th, B.C. 165**). If we reckon back 2 300 full days from this date, it brings us to **B.C. 171**, in which Menelaus, who bribed Antiochus to appoint him high priest, robbed the Temple of some of its treasures, and procured the murder of the high priest Onias III.

**"In this year [171 BC] Antiochus sacrificed a great sow on the altar of burnt offerings, and sprinkled its broth over the sacred building. These crimes provoked the revolt of the Jews in which they killed Lysimachus, governor of Syria, and brought on themselves a heavy retribution.**

"If we reckon back 2300 half-days, 1150 whole days, we must go back 3 years and 70 days, but we cannot tell what exact event the writer had in mind as the starting-point of his calculations. The actual time which elapsed from the final defilement of the Temple by Apollonius, the general of Antiochus, in **B.C. 168**, till its re-purification was roughly 3 years. Perhaps, however - for all is uncertain - the writer reckoned from the earliest steps taken, or contemplated, by Antiochus for the suppression of Judaism.

"The purification of the Temple did not end the time of persecution, which was to continue, first, for 140 days longer, and then 45 days more ([Dan 12:11-12](#)). It is clear from this that the writer reckoned the beginning and the end of troubles from different epochs which we have no longer sufficient data to discover."



The Expositor's commentary hints that the 1290 days of Daniel 12:11 **may** have been fulfilled at the time of the first abomination of desolation, however, we simply do not have the data to prove it! This opens the door for this prophecy to be fulfilled in the end time.

Going back to the 2300 evening and mornings, was this just fulfilled anciently or is there evidence for the prophecy being dual with an end time fulfillment? We saw before how Antiochus Epiphanes' death fulfilled the prophecy of being broken without a human hand. The part about standing up against the Prince of Princes could be either metaphorical or it could be literal. If literal then that means there will be an end time fulfillment.

There is something more definitive in this chapter pointing to an end time fulfillment. In [Daniel 8:17](#) we read: "So he came near beside my place. And when he came, I was afraid and fell on my face. But he said to me, Understand, O son of man, for the vision is for **the time of the end.**"

The term "time of the end" is almost universally applied to the time before the second coming of Jesus Christ to bring the Kingdom of God to this earth.

**Daniel 8:13-14** says: "Until when shall the vision last, concerning the daily sacrifice and the transgression that astounds, to give both the sanctuary and the host to be trampled? And he said to me, For 2 300 evenings and mornings. Then the sanctuary shall be cleansed."

He asks when the vision was to come to an end regarding "the daily sacrifice [being] taken away by him", "the transgression that astounds" (most likely the setting up of an idol in the Temple) and "the sanctuary and the host [being] trampled" before being told the answer of 2300 evening and mornings.

This could refer to 2300 literal days or it could refer to 2300 evening and morning sacrifices (1150 days). The Hebrew leans a little more to the latter.

What is the starting point for this? Is it the end time stopping of the sacrifices and abomination of desolation (possibly 1290 days out from the return of Christ – **Daniel 12:11**) or perhaps even when the sacrifices restart before being later stopped. **The wording simply isn't clear enough to tell.**

If the former then perhaps the two witnesses or the Jews themselves cleanse the sanctuary 140 days before the return of Christ while the beast power is tied up fighting the hordes from the north and the east (**Daniel 11:44**).

We've already looked at **Daniel 11:31** which is placed in the series of prophecies in that chapter at the place in time we would expect to find Antiochus Epiphanes. Only later in **Daniel 11:40** does it then jump to the time of the end.

In the following chapter we again read about the abomination of desolation. Let's look at the full context:

"And at that time Michael shall stand up, the great ruler who stands for the sons of your people. **And there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation; until that time.** And at that time your people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book. And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt...

"And one said to the man clothed in linen on the waters of the river: **Until when shall be the end of these wonders?** And I heard the man clothed in linen, who was on the waters of the river, when he held up his right and his left hand to Heaven, and swore by Him who lives forever that it shall be for **a time, times, and a half. And when they have made an end of scattering the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished.**

"And I heard, but I did not understand. Then I said, O my lord, what shall be the end of these things? And He said, Go, Daniel! For the words are closed up and sealed until the time of the end. Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried. But the wicked shall do wickedly. And none of the wicked shall understand, but the wise shall understand.

**"And from the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that makes desolate is set up, there shall be 1290 days.**

**"Blessed is he who waits and comes to the 1335 days.** But you go on to the end, for you shall rest and stand in your lot at the end of the days (**Daniel 12:1-2, 6-13**).

There is mention in **Daniel 12:11** here of 1290 days that would follow the stopping of the daily sacrifice and the abomination of desolation. Is this the primary fulfillment of this verse or is there an end time fulfillment as well?

In **Daniel 12:1** there is a clear reference to the Great Tribulation where it speaks of a time of trouble such as there ever was a nation. **Matthew 24:21** says: "For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be." **Jeremiah 30:7** similarly says: "Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall be saved out of it."



The “time, times and half a time” in **Daniel 12:7** is usually interpreted as 3 ½ years (1 year – time, 2 years – times, ½ year – half a time). This period is “when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, [and] **all these things shall be finished.**” The prophecies of the previous chapter won’t be finished until the return of Christ. This appears to be a better fit than the scattering of the holy people by the Romans started around **70 AD** but not completed until the final Jewish revolt around **135 AD**.

This “**time, times and half a time**” is usually equated with the **42 months** that Jerusalem will be trampled by the Gentiles in the Great Tribulation and the **1260 days** in which the two witnesses will prophesy – “But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under **42 months**. And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy **1260 days**, clothed in sackcloth.”

If we multiply 42 by 30 we come up with 1260 days. Many Bible students believe that a year of 360 days with 12 months of 30 days each is the year that is being used in some prophecies like this one as opposed to the current Hebrew calendar which has alternating months of 29 and 30 days. This may or may not be true. There is simply not enough data to confirm or reject this hypothesis.

As confirmed in many ancient sources from around the ancient world, prior to around the time of Hezekiah there was a shorter year of 360 days with 12 months of exactly 30 days each. Noah used 30 day months at the time of the Flood rather than alternating months of 29 and 30 days as the Hebrew calendar does today (compare **Genesis 7:11** with **Genesis 8:3-4**). The calendar change occurred before Daniel’s time so it is a little unusual why 360 day years would be used for the prophecies in the Book of Revelation.

In addition to the **1260 days** when the two witnesses will prophesy in the Great Tribulation (noted in **Revelation 12:3**), **Daniel 12** notes two other periods – **1290 days (Daniel 12:11)** and **1335 days (Daniel 12:12)**.

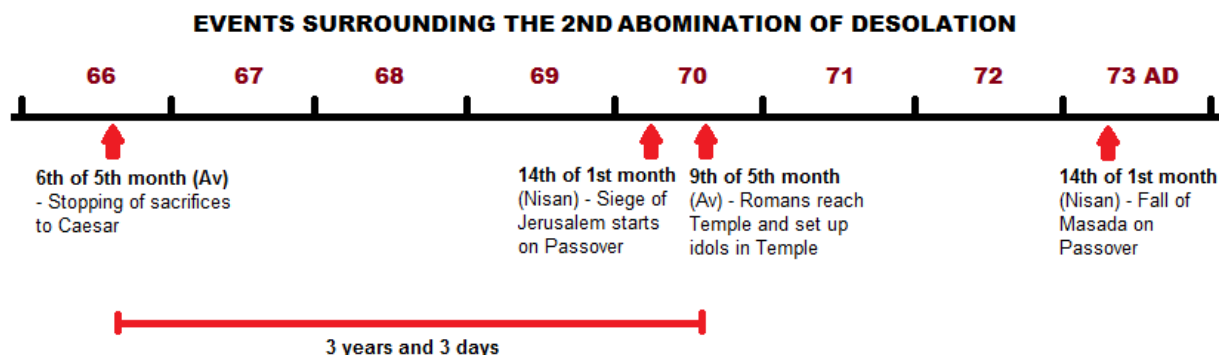
In **Daniel 12:11** it says “And from the time that **the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that makes desolate is set up**, there shall be **1290 days.**”

In the time of Antiochus Epiphanes Josephus tells us “He [Antiochus] also spoiled the temple, and put a stop to the constant practice of offering a daily sacrifice of expiation for **3 years and 6 months**” (Wars of the Jews, Book 1, Chapter 1, Verse 1).

**This 3 years and 6 months** equates to about **1270 days** and is the time that the daily sacrifices were stopped for. Using 2 leap months rather than 1 leap month would make this period 1300 days. Either way this period differs from the **1290 days** noted in **Daniel 12:11**.

How does this fit with the second “abomination of desolation” that Jesus referred to in 70 AD? Notice the following dates derived from Josephus’ account in Wars of the Jews:

<b>66 AD - 6th of 5th month (Av)</b>	Stopping of sacrifices to Caesar
<b>70 AD - 14th of 1st month (Nisan)</b>	Siege of Jerusalem starts on Passover
<b>70 AD - 9th of 5th month (Av)</b>	Romans reach Temple and set up idols in Temple
<b>73 AD - 14th of 1st month (Nisan)</b>	Fall of Masada on Passover



One author claims (<http://revelationrevolution.org/daniel-chapter-12-a-preterist-commentary/>) that from the stopping of the sacrifices to Caesar in 66 AD to the setting up of idols in the eastern wing of the Temple that the Romans made sacrifices to was 1290 days. He also claims that from that the abomination of desolation in the Temple when the Romans made sacrifices to the day after Masada fell (he gives the year as 74 AD instead of 73 AD) was 1335 days.

Even if his year for the fall of Masada is correct, when I have cross-checked those periods I get a different numbers of days than 1290 days from Av 6, 66 AD to Av 9, 70 AD and 1335 days from Av 9, 70 AD to Nisan 15, 73 or 74 AD no matter what combination of leap months I use.

**As best as I can tell, there is NO MATCH for the 1290 and 1335 days for the Jewish revolt when Jerusalem was destroyed by the Romans in 70 AD.**

**Now if 1290 days does not appear to fit both the 1st and 2nd abominations of desolation in 168 BC and 70 AD then it appears, by a process of elimination, to refer to a future end time abomination of desolation when sacrifices will be stopped and an idol of some description is set up in a Jewish temple.**

Raymond McNair makes these comments on the end-time abomination of desolation:

"It appears, then, that some form of Temple worship will first be reinstituted by the Jews. Otherwise, how could the sacrifices be 'cut off'? However, whether there will be an actual temple—or just a sacrificial altar as in the days of Ezra—is not certain. Yet a strong argument can be made for the former since the Apostle Paul says that the final 'man of sin'—the false religious leader...who will be in partnership with the Beast dictator—will enthrone himself 'as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God' ([2 Thessalonians 2:4](#))

"It should be noted that quite a number of Jews are right now engaged in reproducing implements of Levitical worship and drawing up plans for a new house of worship on the Temple Mount. If they do actually build a temple or altar in the years to come, this would certainly fan the flames of Arab hatred toward Israel" (The Coming War for the City of Peace, World Ahead, Sept-Oct. 1997, p.20).

There are two references ([Daniel 8:17](#) & [Daniel 8:25](#)) that appear to support an end time abomination of desolation in [Daniel 8](#). The 1290 days of [Daniel 12:11](#) may have been fulfilled anciently with the first abomination of desolation and, only by a process of elimination do we see evidence for [Daniel 12:11](#) having a future fulfillment.

We know from [2 Thessalonians 2:4](#) that there will be an end time Temple as the false prophet goes into the Temple and claims to sit as God in the Temple. That there will be an end time Temple gives strong support for the reinstitution of sacrifices in that Temple and the stopping of those and a future abomination of desolation in that Temple.

[Revelation 11:2-3](#) tells us the beast power controls Jerusalem for 42 months and the two witnesses prophesy for 1260 days. Additionally, the church is also protected for 1260 days ([Revelation 12:6](#)). This period is the same as the "time, times and half a time" mentioned a few verses later in [Revelation 12:14](#). This same phrase, "time, times and half a time", we saw was used in [Daniel 12:7](#) for the time of the "scattering the power of the holy people", which will start with the Jews (Israel today) and then the other nations descended from Israel.

**The end of the 42 months that Jerusalem is trodden on by the Gentiles appears to be the return of Jesus Christ. That period of 42 months the beast power controls Jerusalem and the 1260 days that the church is protected for appears to be the total length of the Great Tribulation.**

This 42 months is assumed to be 1260 days (3 years and 6 months) using a prophetic year of 360 days. It is around 9 days shorter than 3 years and 6 months using today's Hebrew calendar. The length of 1260 days using today's calendar is closer to 42 months than 41 months so 42 months may just be a rounded up figure equal to 1260 days.

Depending on whether you use the prophetic year or not, the period of 1290 days from the stopping of sacrifices and setting up of the abomination of desolation to some unspecified event is either 30 or 40 days longer than the 42 months.

**Like the 1260 days (42 months), the unspecified event is assumed to end with the return of Jesus Christ. It is very unlikely that the 1290 days would start at the same time as the 1260 days and finish 30 days after the return of Christ so the assumption that they both end at the return of Christ is quite logical and sound.**

If the abomination of desolation occurs 1290 days before Jesus Christ returns and then a month later (1260 days before Christ's return) Europe invades the Middle East it leads to a very interesting problem. How is it that the beast power will set up some kind of abominable thing in Jerusalem a full month before they actually come in and conquer Jerusalem?

Now if the false prophet does enter the Temple of God and this happens in conjunction with the abomination of desolation how might he do so a month before the armies of Europe conquer Jerusalem and for what purpose? Under what pretext might he do such a thing? We are told that he has miraculous power to do just about anything he wants to ([Revelation 13:13-14](#)).

The leader of the United Europe will tap into the influence that the false prophet will have if he has miracle working powers and work with the Vatican and the church and the European state will be closely working together like in centuries past. Those kind of miracles by the false prophet will undoubtedly shake the Europeans out of their spiritual complacency and a religious revival will sweep through Europe.

I have a theory that could kill two birds with one stone. It could explain why the false prophet comes to the Temple of God the Jews have built and what might arouse the anger of the Arabs against the Europeans. Here is my theory, an educated guess that I hasten to add is just speculation.

What if the false prophet was to use his miracle-working powers and seize it as a golden opportunity to show the ascendancy of Christianity (Catholicism) over the Jewish religion? What if he were to come down to Jerusalem and use his powers to take over the Temple of God? It would be an incredible public relations victory for the Catholic Church if he were to take over the Temple. It would "prove" that Christianity supercedes the Jewish religion and that the church are the true inheritors of the things of God, including possibly the Ark of the Covenant (if found), since the Jews killed and rejected Christ. Why stop the sacrifices? Well, Christ died once and for all and therefore animal sacrifices are no longer necessary.

A takeover by the false prophet of the Temple in Jerusalem would be seen by many Arabs as merely the first step towards a full takeover of Jerusalem by Europe and another crusade.

What if the false prophet to all the world watching on TV were to say the following after this hypothetical takeover of the Temple – "It's now time for Christianity to assert itself as the world's dominant religion and be the instrument to bring God's kingdom and peace to the world"?

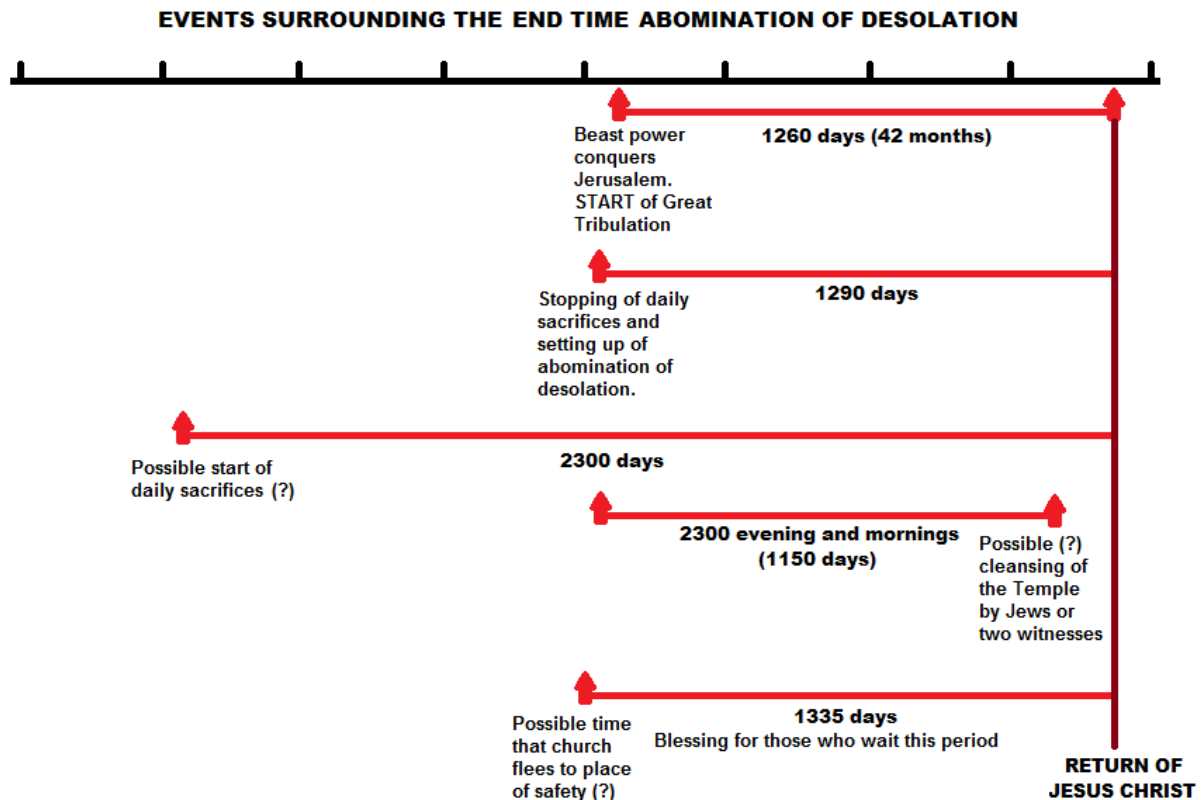
Would that not be like a red flag to a bull for the Arabs who would see it as a declaration of holy war? Another crusade like the ones of the Middle Ages? It would also help put the European people into a frame of mind to accept the coming conquests as being the will of God. The miracles of this future false prophet will be seen the world over on TV and the Arabs will see that miraculous power as a great threat.

So what will the abomination of desolation look like? Jesus described the abomination of desolation to occur in 70 AD as "standing in the holy place" ([Matthew 24:15](#)). The future abomination is described as being "set up" in [Daniel 12:11](#).

The false prophet will exalt himself in the Temple as it says in [2 Thessalonians 2:3-4](#). Could his act on sitting in the holy place, possibly even in the Holy of holies in "the place of God", be the abomination? Perhaps, though that doesn't seem to fit the description of being "set up"? What might he set up in the Temple to desecrate it? I think the most likely scenario is that this coming false prophet might place a throne for himself in the Holy of Holies, making Himself as God within it symbolically and behind it a large standing crucifix with the false image of Jesus.



There is one more number of days spoken of in [Daniel 12:12](#) where we read: “Blessed is he who waits, and comes to the **1335 days**.” So what event might occur 1335 days before Jesus Christ returns, assuming that is the end point for it? No further information is given. The church has traditionally believed that this is possibly the time when God’s people will be told to go to the place of safety and have 75 days to get there before Europe invades the Middle East and the Great Tribulation begins.



### The True Location of the Temple

The prophecy in [2 Thessalonians 2:3-4](#) indicates that there will be a future Temple in Jerusalem before the return of Jesus Christ which today’s Jews are keen to build. There is seemingly one major obstacle in the way to this happening and that is the common belief that the Muslim Dome of the Rock was constructed over the site where the Temples of God stood that both Solomon and later the second Temple was built after the Jews returned from Babylon.

Those Temples are generally assumed to have stood where the Muslim Dome of the Rock now stands but let’s notice a couple of Jesus’ prophecies about what was going to happen to the Temple and Jerusalem:

In [Matthew 24:1-2](#) we read: “Then Jesus went out and departed from the temple, and His disciples came up to show Him the buildings of the temple. And Jesus said to them, ‘Do you not see all these things? Assuredly, I say to you, not one stone shall be left here upon another, that shall not be thrown down’”.

In [Luke 19:41-44](#) Jesus said: “Now as He drew near, He saw the city and wept over it, saying, ‘If you had known, even you, especially in this your day, the things that make for your peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. For days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment around you, surround you and close you in on every side, and level you, and your children within you, to the ground; and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not know the time of your visitation.’”

Both Jerusalem and the Temple would be left without one stone upon another because they didn’t recognise Jesus who came to them was the true Messiah. An eyewitness of the destruction of Jerusalem

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

"Where is this city that was believed to have God himself inhabiting therein? It is now demolished to the very foundations, and hath nothing left **BUT THAT MONUMENT OF IT PRESERVED, I MEAN THE CAMP OF THOSE [ROMANS] THAT DESTROYED IT, WHICH STILL DWELLS UPON ITS RUINS...**I cannot but wish that we had all died before we had seen that holy city demolished by the hands of our enemies, or **THE FOUNDATIONS OF OUR HOLY TEMPLE DUG UP**, after so profane a manner" (Wars of the Jews, Book 7, Chapter 8, Verse 7).



Above is the view of Jerusalem today from the Mount of Olives which is east of Jerusalem. Look at that massive stone platform that the Dome of the Rock sits on today. Those lower stones are universally agreed to have been built by Herod the Great. If that is so, then there is a major contradiction between the accepted belief that this was where the Temple stood with Jesus' prophecies and the eyewitness statement by the general at Masada.

If those stones were indeed built by Herod and if the general at Masada's statement is correct that the Temple was dug up to its very foundations then that stone platform must have been the Roman fort called Fort Antonia. Notice how Josephus described the Roman fort Antonia:

"Now as to the tower of Antonia, it was situated [its entrance was] at the corner of two cloisters [colonnades] of the court of the Temple; of that on the west, and that on the north. It was erected upon a rock of fifty cubits in height, and was on a great precipice. It was the work of King Herod, wherein he demonstrated his natural magnanimity. In the first place, the rock itself was covered over with smooth pieces of stone, from its foundation... The inward parts had the largeness and form of a palace, it being parted into all kinds of rooms and other conveniences, such as courts, and places for bathing, and broad spaces for camps [military training areas]; insomuch that, by having all conveniences that cities wanted, **IT MIGHT SEEM TO BE COMPOSED OF SEVERAL CITIES.**"



A Roman legion was formed of 5000 soldiers and there was at least one full legion based in Jerusalem and so the fort was a lot bigger than it is usually depicted as. A typical Roman camp was around 400 x 500 metres, close to the size of this stone platform on which the Dome of the Rock now sits. So, if that stone platform was Fort Antonia where was the Temple? Josephus stated that the Fort was to the north of



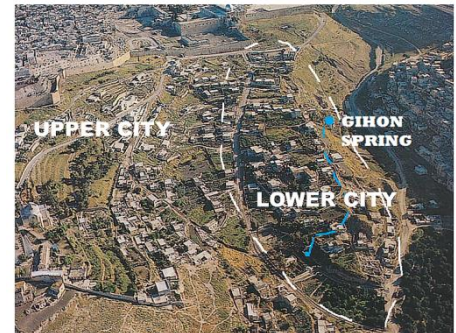
the Temple so Josephus places the Temple south of the Roman fort. The Roman historian Tacitus gives us another major clue.

"The Temple resembled a fortress and had its own walls, which were more laboriously constructed than the others. Even the colonnades with which it was surrounded formed an admirable outer defense. **IT CONTAINED AN INEXHAUSTIBLE SPRING**" (Tacitus, History, 5, 11-12).

There was a spring that lay underneath the Temple complex. There are two reasons why it was located near a spring 1) Living waters symbolically flow from the throne of God and 2) Water in abundance was needed for the sacrifices.

The Gihon spring is the only spring in Jerusalem and is around 250 metres (700 feet) south of where southern wall of the stone platform where the Dome of the Rock is today. To the right is a photo taken before much of the excavations that took place from the 1960's on that shows why the City of David was a great defensible location with steep sides on either side and its own water source.

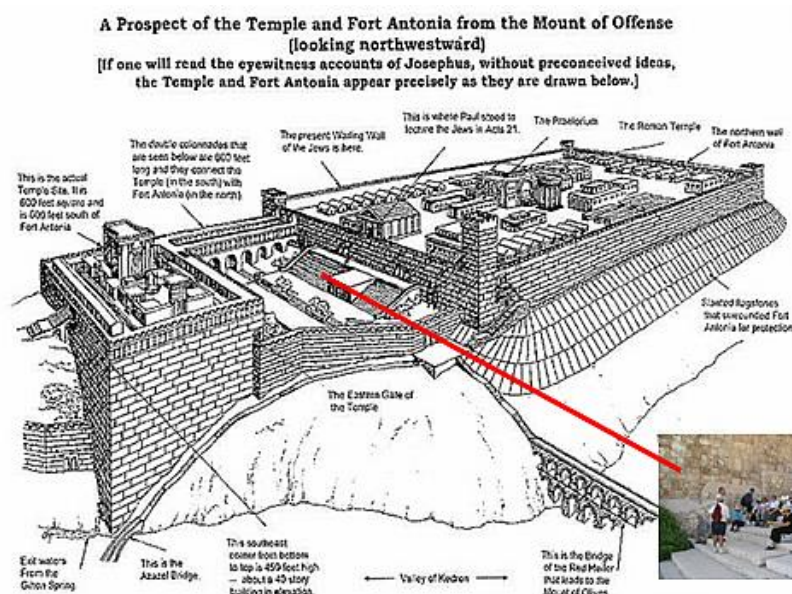
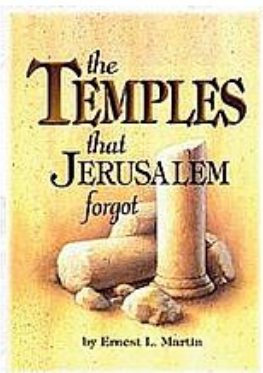
**THE CITY OF DAVID AND THE GIHON SPRING**



The Gihon Spring was where the tabernacle resided before the Temple was built in Solomon's day (**1 Kings 1:38-39**). In describing the Temple during the time of Jesus day Josephus wrote:

"This hill [Temple platform] was walled all round, and in compass 4 stades [a stade was 600 feet], each angle [of the square] containing in length a stade [600 feet on each side] [Antiquities of the Jews, Book 15, Chapter 11, Verse 3]...The colonnades were 30 cubits broad [45 feet], and the complete circuit of them, embracing [the colonnades to and from] the Tower of Antonia, measured 6 stades" [Wars of the Jews, Book 5, Chapter 5, Verse 2]

Based on the research I have presented here on the Temple from Ernest Martin's book "The Temples That Jerusalem Forgot" here is an artist's illustration of what the Temple really looked like in relation to the true size of Fort Antonia where the Dome of the Rock is today. Each side of the Temple was a little under 200 metres long or about the length of two football fields. Notice the stairs up to Fort Antonia on its southern side. That was most likely the site where the crowds gathered when Pilate offered to release either Jesus or Barabbas.



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

Our holy and our beautiful house, where our fathers praised thee, is burned up with fire; and all our pleasant things are laid waste': and the Temple which earned reverence throughout the world has become the refuse dump of the new city whose founder [Hadrian] called it Aelia [that is, Hadrian called his new city Aelia Capitolina] (Quoted by Moshe Gil, A History of Palestine 634-1099, p.67 – Temples p.175).

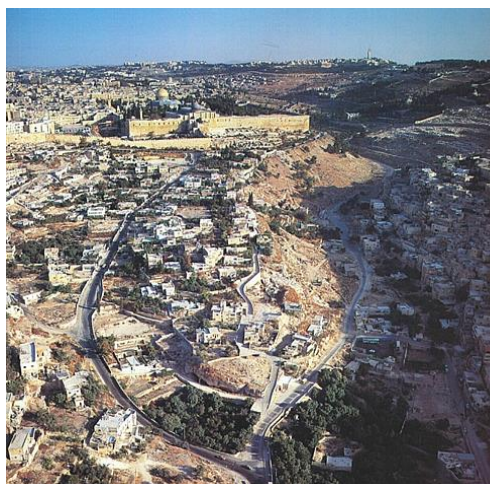
Jerome said the Temple area was turned into dump. Of the Temple site Eusebius about the same time as Jerome wrote that the Temple:

"...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."

This is a fulfillment of **Micah 3:12** which says: "Therefore because of you Zion shall be plowed like a field. Jerusalem shall become heaps of ruins and the mountain of the temple like the bare hills of the forest."

So what is on this site today? After my first visit to Jerusalem in 1999 the Jews had taken over quite a bit of the northern part of the spur that was the original City of David and developed an archaeological park that is a huge tourist attraction.

Its key attraction is Hezekiah's tunnel that goes from the Gihon spring to the southern end of the spur where the Pool of Siloam is. Arab houses are further south where the Temple site was but the Jews are quite eager to buy them out. The left photo is looking up the hill from the south. The two photos I took on the top and bottom right (about 2/3rds up the hill from the south) are approximately where the Temple stood.



Now if the Temple was further south as this research indicates and if the Jews accepted this research then there is no need to move or blow up the Dome of the Rock if the Jews wanted to rebuild the Temple. It's just a matter of acquiring the private properties owned by Arab citizens who currently live on that site.

### The 70 Weeks Prophecy

Another great prophecy in the Bible that many churches believe will partly be fulfilled in the end time and relates to the city of Jerusalem and the Middle East is the 70 weeks prophecy of Daniel 9. Let's look at this mysterious prophecy and note its purpose and the key elements within it:

**"Seventy weeks [literally Seventy "sevens"] are decreed upon your people and upon your holy city to finish the transgression and to make an end of sin, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy.**

**"Know therefore and understand that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem, to Messiah the Prince, shall be 7 weeks, and 62 weeks. It shall be built again with streets and the wall, even in troublous times.**

**“And after 62 weeks Messiah shall be cut off**, but not for Himself. And the people of the prince who shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. But his end shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined.

**“And he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week. And in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the offering to cease**, and upon the wing of abominations shall come one who makes desolate even until the consummation. **And the fully determined end which is decreed shall be poured out upon the desolator.”**

The purpose of the prophecy is that these 70 “sevens” are decreed upon Israel and Jerusalem:

- To finish the transgression and make an end to sin
- To make reconciliation for iniquity
- To bring in everlasting righteousness
- To seal up the vision and prophecy
- To anoint the Most Holy

**This is the purpose of the prophecy – to reveal the fate of Israel and Jerusalem and their eventual reconciliation with God through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.**

Some key elements that are noted in the prophecy are the following:

- **The starting point is a command to restore and build Jerusalem. Note that it is Jerusalem and NOT the Temple specified in the starting decree. It speaks of the streets and the wall being built in troublesome times.**
- There are two blocks of 7 “sevens” and 62 “sevens” to Messiah the Prince. There is nothing definitive that indicates whether these two blocks are continuous or separated.
- It states that after 62 “sevens” Messiah shall be cut off for others. This indicates that the block of 7 “sevens” occurs before the block of 62 “sevens”.
- **During the 70th “seven” (the last “seven”) a covenant is made by “he”. The identity of the person noted as “he” is not crystal clear. The Messiah is spoken of at the beginning of the previous verse and then the prince of the people who destroys Jerusalem is spoken of in the latter part of the previous verse. The “he” could be the Messiah or the Roman leader or potentially even both.**
- In the midst of that last “seven” this “he” shall cause the sacrifice and offering to cease.
- It then goes straight on to speak of abomination and desolation, presumably upon Jerusalem. The abomination of desolation appears to form part of the prophecy.

The starting point of Daniel 9's 70 weeks prophecy is a command to restore and build Jerusalem. It is Jerusalem and NOT just the Temple that is specified in the starting decree. It speaks of the streets and the wall being built in troublesome times. In relation to Jerusalem and the Temple there are 4 decrees recorded in the post-Exile period noted in the Bible.

- The 1st is Cyrus' decree in his 1st year to rebuild the Temple (**Ezra 1:1-6**) which **Josephus confirms also included rebuilding Jerusalem** (Antiquities of the Jews, op. cit., 11, 2) as stated in Isaiah's prophecy about Cyrus (**Isaiah 44:28**) and this is dated to **539 BC**. As it includes the rebuilding of Jerusalem it could be a contender for the right decree.
- The 2nd is Darius I's decree in his 2nd year to complete the Temple (**Ezra 6:1-12**) dated to **520 BC** which saw its completion a few years later in **516 BC**. This one is only related to the Temple, NOT to Jerusalem so does not appear to fit the criteria for being the right decree for the start of the prophecy.
- The 3rd is the decree of Artaxerxes in his 7th year (**Ezra 7:7-28**). This Artaxerxes is usually identified as Artaxerxes I which, IF this identification was correct, would place it in **457 BC**. Many churches choose this one because 483 years (69 x 7) neatly fits between this one and the start of Jesus' ministry (26 AD).

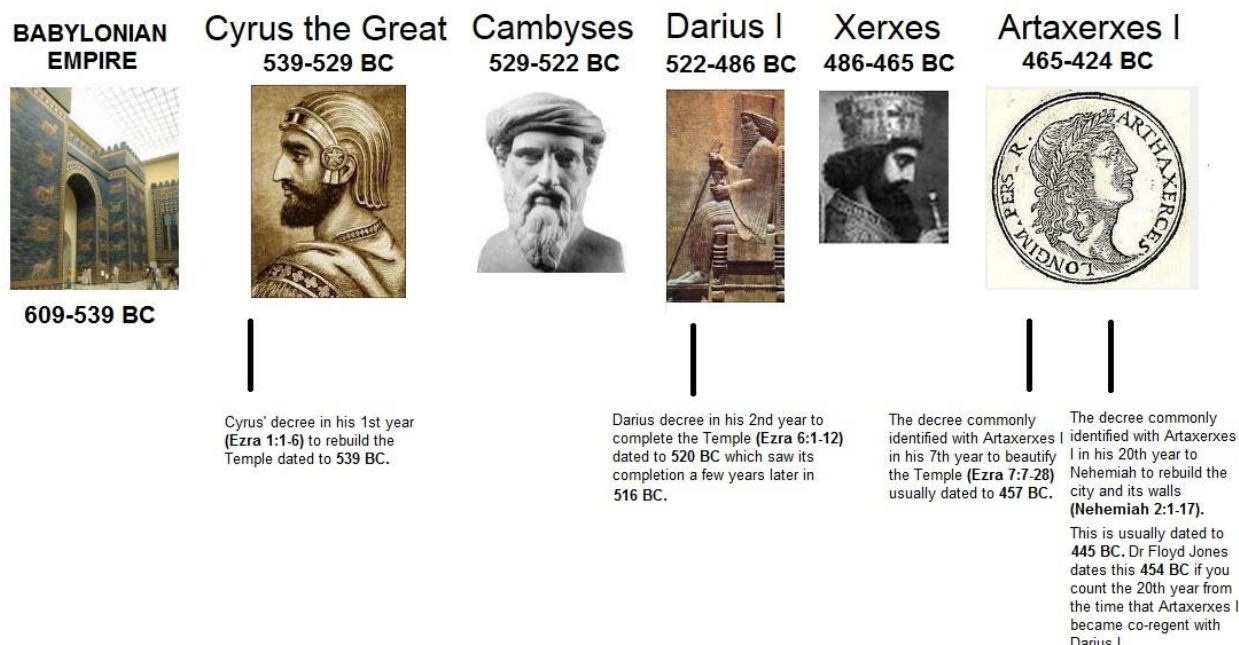


However, the nature of this decree was **ONLY** to beautify the Temple ([Ezra 7:7-28](#)). It had nothing to do with building either the Temple, which was completed before it, or building Jerusalem. It does not fit the criteria laid out in Daniel 9 for the starting decree!

- The 4th and last decree is that in Artaxerxes' 20th year to rebuild the city and its walls ([Nehemiah 2:1-17](#)). Again, this Artaxerxes is usually identified as Artaxerxes I which, IF this identification was correct, would place it in **444 BC**.

Dr Floyd Jones, who identifies the Artaxerxes in [Nehemiah 2](#) as Artaxerxes I, dates this earlier to 454 BC when if you count the 20th year from the time that Artaxerxes I became co-regent with Darius I, rather than the sole king. This decree does fit the criteria for being the right decree for the start of the prophecy.

#### EARLY PERSIAN KINGS AND THEIR DECREES



**Only the first and last decrees above - Cyrus' 1st year decree and Artaxerxes' 20th year decree fit the criteria of including the rebuilding of Jerusalem and not just the Temple!**

Dr Floyd Jones in his book "The Chronology of the Old Testament" discusses what could be described as a chronological nightmare that is found in the post-exile books of Ezra and Nehemiah. He writes:

"It has long been recognized that the books of Ezra and Nehemiah exhibit a built-in yet distasteful quandary. The Book of Ezra begins in the 16th year of Cyrus, about 536 BC ([Ezra 1:1](#)), and the Book of Nehemiah ends around the 32nd year of a Persian king designated as 'Artaxerxes' ([Neh. 2:1; 13:6](#)).

As nearly all scholars identify this monarch as being Artaxerxes Longimanus [Artaxerxes I], the Book of Nehemiah is seen to close near 434 BC (his 32nd year).

**"Thereby these two books apparently span nearly 102 years (536 - 434 = 102).** Within them, the names 'Ezra' ([Neh. 12:1](#), cp. [Ezra 1:1-2:2](#)) and 'Nehemiah' ([Ezra 2:2](#)) are found throughout beginning from the first year of Cyrus, at which time the men bearing these names are listed among the leaders returning from the Babylonian captivity with Zerubbabel, unto the end (or very nearly so, [Neh. 12:36](#), etc.).

**"The 'unpleasantness' produced by this is that although the context of the narrative seems to depict them as being the same two men, their ages become uncomfortably large. Being portrayed as leaders demands a minimal age of 30 in the first year of Cyrus, and when the 102 year span is added to this, Nehemiah would have been at least 132 and Ezra, who is last mentioned in the 20th year of 'Artaxerxes' (c. 445?), a minimal of 121 years (536 - 445 = 91 + 30) by the story's end...**

"The fact that the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah were originally only one volume makes this all the more troublesome...

"The predicament arises from a comparison of the lists of priests and Levites returning with Zerubbabel in the first year of Cyrus as sole rex of Persia and Babylonia (536 BC, Neh. 12:1-9) with the list of priests who sealed a covenant with Nehemiah (Neh. 10:1-10). The consensus of nearly all scholarship is that this latter event of sealing the covenant took place in the 20th year of Artaxerxes (445 BC).

**"The correlation reveals that at least 16 and possibly as many as 20 of those who returned [in Cyrus' 1st year] with Zerubbabel in leadership positions (hence 30 and older) were still alive in the 20th year of Artaxerxes [Artaxerxes I], if indeed most scholars are correct in assigning the Nehemiah covenant to that date.**

**"If this "Artaxerxes" were Longimanus [Artaxerxes I], as is currently taught, then this generation of leaders would still have been alive 91 years (536 – 445 = 91) after they returned to Jerusalem" (p.240-241).**

**The only way to truly resolve this chronological nightmare is if the Artaxerxes at the end of the book of Nehemiah is a different Artaxerxes than Artaxerxes I.**

Could a previous Persian king before the first recognised Artaxerxes possibly be the correct Artaxerxes of Nehemiah?

**If so, then this has a major knock-on effect for the famous 70 weeks prophecy of Daniel 9 as the Artaxerxes of both the 3rd and 4th decrees noted above were both made by the same Artaxerxes.**

The name Artaxerxes used in Ezra and Nehemiah is the Greek equivalent of Ahasuerus in the book of Esther. This is a title rather than a proper name and means "mighty king". It could be used for any Persian king in the same way that Pharaoh can be used for any Egyptian king.

A king referred to as both Ahasuerus and Artaxerxes was petitioned by the Jews' enemies to have the work in Jerusalem stopped in [Ezra 4:6-7](#). The petition was successful and the work is stopped until the 2nd year of Darius.

Only one Persian king is noted as reigning between Cyrus the Great and Darius I and that is Cambyses. Cambyses is the king accepted here as the Ahasuerus of [Ezra 4:6](#) and also the same as Artaxerxes in the next verse. So here, we have another king commonly accepted as Artaxerxes who was not Artaxerxes I.

Dr Floyd Jones in his book "The Chronology of the Old Testament" makes a great case for Darius I being the Ahasereus who married Esther. He uses two details relating to the number of provinces in the empire and another detail relating to some islands showing this can only apply to Darius I, not Xerxes who most scholars believe was Esther's husband.

The first Book of Esdras recites verbatim [Esther 1:1-3](#), the only change being that of replacing the name "Ahasuerus" with "Darius" (1 Esdras 3:1-2). This Darius is later firmly identified as Darius Hystaspis by relating that it was in the 6th year of this king's reign that the temple was completed (1 Esdras 6:5, [Ezra 6:15](#)).

While Dr Jones supports Artaxerxes I as the Artaxerxes of Nehemiah, his evidence for Darius being the Ahasereus who married Esther can be used to support the possibility of Darius I also being the Artaxerxes of Nehemiah since the titles Artaxerxes and Ahasereus are one and the same.

While not using Dr Jones evidence from Esther, Fred Coulter in his book "The Appointed Times of the Messiah" believes Darius I is the Artaxerxes of Nehemiah who became king in 522 BC.

**If we calculate the date for the 7th year of Artaxerxes' decree in [Ezra 7](#) which involved the supply of gold and silver and other treasures to decorate the Temple and identify this Artaxerxes as Darius I we have a date of 515 BC - almost immediately after the Temple was completed in 6th year of Darius noted in the previous chapter in [Ezra 6](#).**

Logically decorating the Temple would happen right after the Temple is built, NOT 60 years after with the conventional identification of Artaxerxes as Artaxerxes I. By identifying Artaxerxes in [Ezra 7](#) as Artaxerxes I scholars have added an artificial gap of 60 years into this book/s.

[Ezra 6](#) has the Temple being completed in Darius I's 6th year and right after in [Ezra 7](#) the decree to decorate the Temple happens the year after in his 7th year. It is illogical for there to be a 60 year gap here and then they decorate the Temple.

By identifying Artaxerxes in [Ezra 7](#) as Darius I we nicely resolve the chronological problem in Nehemiah where Nehemiah and many of the same priests are there at the time of Cyrus and also at the time the wall is completed supposedly 90 years later.

By identifying Esther's husband as Darius I and not Xerxes this means that she became queen (in Ahasereus' 3rd year) the year after Darius I (in his 2nd year) allowed the Temple to be rebuilt that was completed 4 years later.

The unchangeable law of the Medes and Persians worked in favour of the Jews as Darius could not rescind the Temple rebuild decree once given. Thwarted by that, the Jews' enemies then tried to use the unchangeable law of the Medes and Persians against the Jews. Since they couldn't stop the Temple they went all out to destroy the people.

If Darius I is the Artaxerxes of Nehemiah then Nehemiah hears of the state of the city and petitions Darius I in his 20th year in **502 BC** to rebuild the city and the wall. Nehemiah and the Jews complete the building of the wall 10 years later. Nehemiah deals with the issue of sabbath-breaking in the last chapter of [Nehemiah 13](#) before he completes his time as governor overseeing the completion of the city and the wall in **490 BC**.

#### FLOW OF EVENTS IN EZRA, NEHEMIAH AND ESTHER

DATE	EZRA	ESTHER	NEHEMIAH	EVENT
539 BC	Ezra 1-3			Cyrus the Great's decree to rebuild the Temple and journey back to begin this work.
c. 525 BC	Ezra 4			Opposition from enemies that stopped work for several years in Cambyses' reign (529-522 BC)
520 BC	Ezra 5			Darius I's 2nd year to recommence work on the Temple
519 BC		Book of Esther		In Darius' 3rd year the Jews' enemies try to destroy the Jews. Esther becomes Darius' wife and helps prevent genocide.
516 BC	Ezra 6			Completion of Temple in Darius' 6th year
515 BC	Ezra 7-8			In Darius' 7th year the Temple is decorated with gifts of gold and silver given by Darius I, who married Esther.
502 BC			Nehemiah 1-2	Nehemiah hears of the state of the city and petitions Darius I in his 20th year to rebuild the city and the wall.
c. 500-495 BC			Nehemiah 3-5	The wall is built under continual opposition from the enemies of the Jews.
492 BC			Nehemiah 6-7	After 10 years the wall is completed in the 6th month of the year.
492 BC	Ezra 9-10		Nehemiah 8-11	Ezra reads the Law of Moses. The people confess to intermarrying pagan wives and make covenant to put them away.
492 BC			Nehemiah 12	The wall is then dedicated.
492-490 BC			Nehemiah 13	Nehemiah deals with sabbath-breaking and completes his 12 year governorship in Darius' 32nd year.

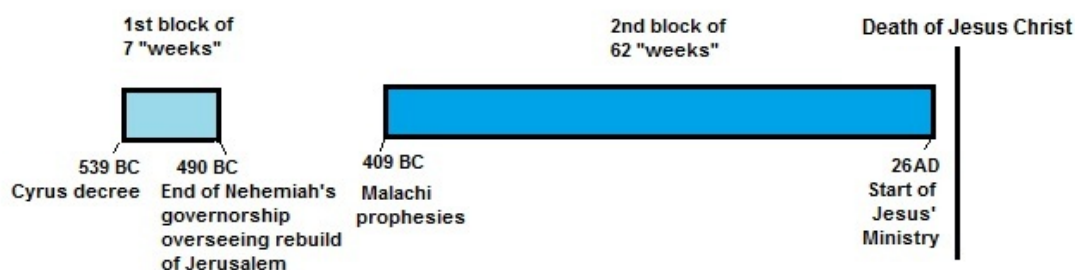
**Daniel 9** says that there is a combined 69 "sevens" between the command to restore Jerusalem and the coming of Messiah. This combination is formed of two blocks of 7 "sevens" and 62 "sevens". There must be some purpose to these two groupings of 49 years (7 "sevens") and 434 years (62 "sevens").

The only two decrees that match the criteria of **Daniel 9:25** as the starting point are Cyrus' decree of **539 BC** and Darius I's 20th year decree in **502 BC**. Even going forward from the latter one in **502 BC** by 483 years you come to **19 BC** so there almost certainly appears to be a break or hiatus between the first 7 sevens and the remaining 62 sevens which is a rather uncomfortable thought as there is no clear scriptural indication as to when the second grouping of 62 sevens would then begin.

By using Darius I as the Artaxerxes in Ezra/Nehemiah we find that Nehemiah and company complete the job of restoring Jerusalem and Nehemiah finishes his governorship in **490 BC** - exactly 49 years after Cyrus' decree initial decree to rebuild both Jerusalem and the Temple in **539 BC**. This physical restoration of Jerusalem completes the 7 "sevens" of the prophecy.

Fred Coulter has a break between the two blocks of 7 and 62 "sevens" and the second block of 62 "sevens" which he believes in is about spiritual judgment, he has starting with Malachi's proclamation of the coming Messiah shortly before **400 BC**. There is no definitive date for the book of Malachi. Fred Coulter favours **409 BC** with the 62 "sevens" ending in **26 AD** with the start of the ministry of Christ.

### HISTORICAL FULFILLMENT OF THE FIRST 69 "WEEKS" OF DANIEL'S 70 WEEK PROPHECY



Above is a chart showing the fulfillment of the first 69 weeks using the Cyrus decree as the start given the other potential decrees are all ruled out when the correct Persian king, Darius I, is recognised as the Artaxerxes of **Ezra 7** and **Nehemiah 2**.

The last week of the 70 weeks prophecy is quite complex just like the first 69 weeks.

**Daniel 9:26** says: "And after 62 weeks Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself. And the people of the prince who shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. But his end shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined.

This is clearly the coming of Jesus Christ and the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple which followed 40 years later in **70 AD**.

**Daniel 9:27** says: "And he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week. And in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the offering to cease, and upon the wing of abominations shall come one who makes desolate even until the consummation. And the fully determined end which is decreed shall be poured out upon the desolator."

If the "he" is "the prince of the people who shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary" noted in the previous verse i.e. the leader of the Romans then this can't refer to the time the Romans under General Titus destroyed Jerusalem in 70 AD. No such deal or covenant was made with the Jews prior to it in 66/67 AD.

While we know from **2 Thessalonians 2:3-4** that there will be an end time Temple and evidence from Daniel that there will be an end time abomination of desolation and that is highly likely if the false prophet takes over that end time Temple.



If we interpret the “he” as Jesus Christ who causes “the sacrifice and the offering to cease” or there is then no longer a need for sacrifices because of the sacrifice He made for sin, then we don’t have an adequate explanation for the last line which speaks of an “end to be poured out on the desolator.” General Titus (who was a prince at the time as his father was emperor) did not get punished by God after destroying Jerusalem. A decade later he became emperor.

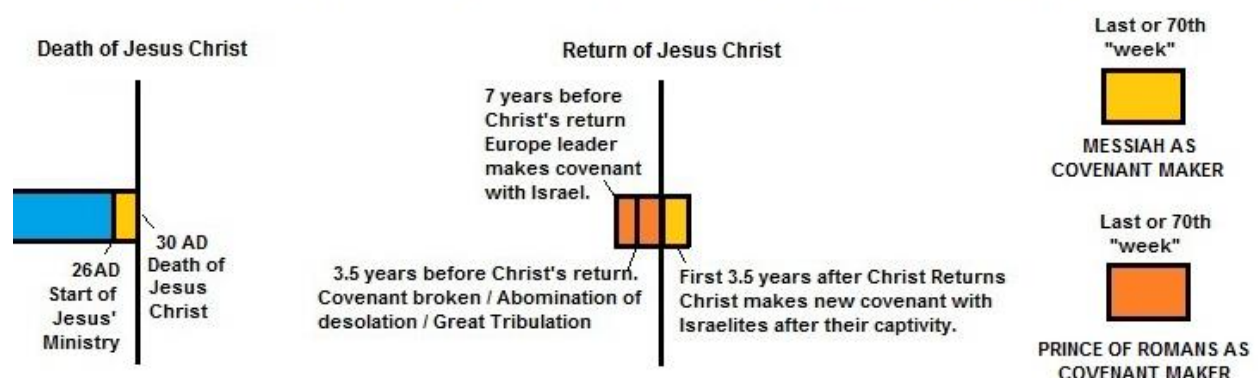
The punishment of the beast leader ([Daniel 11:45](#), [Revelation 19:20](#)) appears to be a much better fit for the “end to be poured out on the desolator”.

**It may well be that the identity of the “he” is deliberately left unclear because it has a dual application of both Jesus Christ and the leader of the Romans!**

The two parallel lines of the story for the final week could be blended and summed up in this way with the 5 purposes of the prophecy noted here:

- **[MESSIAH – first half of the week]** Christ is baptised by John (TO ANOINT THE MOST HOLY), proposes the new covenant to Israel starting with His disciples during His 3 ½ year ministry which is accepted by the few. He is crucified paying the penalty of sin for Israel and mankind (TO MAKE RECONCILIATION FOR INIQUITY). He is rejected by Israel which leads to the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple in 70 AD.
- **[PRINCE OF THE ROMANS - first half of the week]** European leader proposes a covenant to Israel 7 years prior to Christ’s coming which the Israelites accept for protection instead of relying on the true Messiah.
- **[PRINCE OF THE ROMANS - second half of the week]** European leader double-crosses Israel causing the “abomination of desolation” desecrating the Temple 3 ½ years before Christ’s return and taking Israel into captivity (TO FINISH THE TRANSGRESSION AND MAKE AN END TO SIN).
- **[MESSIAH – second half of the week]** Jesus Christ returns and destroys the desolator – the Beast power (Daniel 11:45), releases Israel from captivity who finally recognise the true Messiah who proposes the new covenant to them (TO BRING IN EVERLASTING RIGHTEOUSNESS) that leads to the restoration of Jerusalem, the millennial Temple and the House of Israel (TO SEAL UP THE VISION AND PROPHECY).

#### DUAL APPLICATION OF THE FINAL WEEK OF 70 WEEKS PROPHECY





## APPENDIX:

### A Critique of Scott Ashley's Beyond Today article (May-June 2018) "Another Temple Mount Battle: Where Was It Located?"

**BT ARTICLE:** In recent years we've seen denials that any Jewish temples ever existed in Jerusalem or on the Temple Mount (see "Jerusalem's Temple Mount: Center of Conflict," beginning on page 17).

And now another theory is making the rounds, following from similar ideas put forward decades ago, proposing that the Jerusalem temples never existed on the Temple Mount, but instead were located several hundred yards to the south over the Gihon Spring, the original water source for ancient Jerusalem. According to this theory, the area that's been identified as the Temple Mount for the last 2,000 years is actually the site of the Antonia Fortress, originally built by Herod the Great and later used by the Romans.

This theory — which to our knowledge isn't supported by any trained Western archaeologist today — is built on a number of flawed assumptions and is contradicted by a great deal of biblical, historical and archaeological evidence. Regrettably, since it ignores or denies clear evidence, it also plays into the hands of those who deny any Jewish presence or Jewish temple in Jerusalem.

**RESPONSE:** As we progress through analysing this article we will see a number of direct eyewitness testimonies that relate to the correct location of the Temple given by Josephus, Eleazar (Jewish Commander at Masada), Tacitus and Aristeas that are all either missed or left out of this article.

The comment about the alternative view of the Temple's location playing "into the hands of those who deny any Jewish presence or Jewish temple in Jerusalem" is a rather odd statement. It no more denies the Jewish or Temple presence in Jerusalem than the traditional viewpoint.

**BT ARTICLE:** In understanding the history of Jerusalem, we need to be aware of the limitations of archaeological evidence. One is simply the fact that Jerusalem is a thriving, growing, active city — and modern houses, businesses, streets and schools lie atop whatever ruins exist from ancient times. This makes it extraordinarily difficult to excavate in and around ancient Jerusalem.

The situation isn't helped by the fact that the city has been fought over dozens of times and destroyed and rebuilt several more times. Nor does it help that the temple constructed by King Solomon was destroyed by Babylonian invaders ca. 587 B.C., and the ruins were covered and built over by a massive foundation platform atop which was built a later temple.

And like Solomon's temple, the temple of Jesus Christ's day was so thoroughly destroyed in the Roman conquest of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 that, as Jesus foretold in Matthew 24:2, "not one stone shall be left here upon another, that shall not be thrown down." He was, in context as shown by Matthew 24:1, Mark 13:1-2 and Luke 21:5, clearly talking about the temple itself and its outer buildings and structures, not the foundation platform on which they were built — a fact misunderstood by many over the years.

**RESPONSE:** While Jesus did not refer to the foundation stones in the Olivet Prophecy He was much more emphatic with the complete destruction of both the Temple and Jerusalem itself over in Luke 19:43-44 where Jesus said: "For the days will come on you [referring to Jerusalem] that your enemies will raise up a rampart to you, and will surround you, and will keep you in on every side. And they will tear you down, and your children within you, and will not leave a stone on a stone because you did not know the time of your visitation."

**Jesus prophesied that every structure of Jewish Jerusalem would be completely leveled to the ground.**

He left us with no ambiguity. If one is honest with the gospels nothing inside and out was to be left of the Temple and Jewish Jerusalem according to Jesus' prophecies.

The article did not mention two critical passages of eyewitness testimony that make clear exactly what Jesus meant by this prophecy. Josephus wrote:

"Caesar [General Titus who later became emperor] gave orders that they should now demolish the entire city and Temple, but should leave as many of the towers standing as were of the greatest eminence; that is, Phasaelus, and Hippicus, and Mariamne; and so much of the wall as enclosed the city on the **WEST side** 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 here believe it [Jerusalem] had ever been inhabited.**

**"This was the end which Jerusalem came to** by the madness of those that were for innovations; a city otherwise of great magnificence, and of mighty fame among all mankind" (Wars of the Jews, Book 7, Chapter 1, Verse 1).

Titus initially thought to leave 3 towers and wall connecting them on the WEST side (NOT the east side wall visible from the Mount of Olives). In verse 11 of the preface of Wars of the Jews Josephus implies they were later destroyed as Eleazar would confirm in his testimony of the destruction.

**Everything else was completed levelled and dug up to its foundations. The walls of the traditional Temple Mount would have been included in this!**

Josephus also said:

"For the war had laid all signs of beauty quite waste: nor if anyone that had known the place before, had come on a sudden to it now, would he have known it again? **But though he were at the city itself yet would he have inquired for it [its whereabouts]** (Wars of the Jews, Book 6, Chapter 1, Verse 1) "

There is some ambiguity in the records as to the fate of the 3 western towers and wall but it appears that the command to leave them standing was rescinded by Titus and they were also destroyed based on the testimony of Eleazar.

As to complete level of destruction of the Temple itself we are left with NO ambiguity by Eleazar, the Jewish commander at Masada. In AD 73, three years after the war was finished in Jerusalem, he stated:

"And where is now that great city [Jerusalem], the metropolis of the Jewish nation, which was fortified by so many walls round about, which had so many fortresses and large towers to defend it, which could hardly contain the instruments prepared for the war, and which had so many ten thousands of men to fight for it?

"Where is this city that was believed to have God himself inhabiting therein? **It is now demolished to the very foundations, and HAS NOTHING LEFT BUT THAT MONUMENT OF IT PRESERVED, I MEAN THE CAMP OF THOSE [THE ROMANS] THAT HAVE 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...

"I cannot but wish that we had all died before we had seen that holy city demolished by the hands of our enemies, **or THE FOUNDATIONS OF OUR HOLY TEMPLE DUG UP, after so profane a manner** (Wars of the Jews, Book 7, Chapter 8, Verse 7).

**Notice that he plainly states that the very foundations of the Holy Temple were dug up! The foundations of the Haram (the traditional Temple Mount platform) are still there for all to see and cannot be the site of the Temple IF the Haram foundation has continuously existed since 70 AD!**

If we accept this eyewitness testimony then the only way to defend the traditional site of the Haram as the Temple is if it can be proved that it was rebuilt on top of the Temple ruins after 70 AD. All archaeologists today believe the Haram foundation has continuously existed since before the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD. No archaeologist would entertain the notion that the Haram was built AFTER the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD.

**If the Haram foundation has indeed existed since before the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD and if we accept Eleazar's testimony as a true eyewitness account then we can only come to the conclusion that Eleazar identified the Haram as the camp of the Romans!**

This crucial eyewitness account was missed in the article despite its incredible relevance to determining the correct location of the Jewish temple site.

**This plain eyewitness account of the Temple foundations being dug up has to be reconciled somehow with the traditional Temple viewpoint for the traditional Temple viewpoint to truly have credibility. Just how is this plain and clear piece of testimony to be reconciled IF the traditional Temple viewpoint is correct???**

**BT ARTICLE:** When it comes to the scarcity of archaeological remains, it was also common up until very recent times to "recycle" building stones in new structures, making it very difficult if not impossible to locate more than a fraction of the original pieces of ancient buildings.

But in spite of these challenges, there are firm and clear remains that can be seen today that mesh perfectly with historical eyewitness accounts from those who personally saw these structures, or knew those who did. Space prevents us from addressing all of the evidence concerning the temple's actual location, but we'll examine some of the most important. Interested readers can learn more from the resources listed at the end of this article.

Where does the Bible place the Jerusalem temples? The Bible and history are clear that Solomon's temple and the later temple built by Zerubbabel were constructed on the same spot (see Ezra 3:3; 5:15; 6:7). Herod the Great later built his great temple, the one that existed in Jesus' day, on the location of Zerubbabel's temple.

**RESPONSE:** While this point is not disputed in this critique the biblical verses quoted above contain nothing that directly states that Zerubbabel's temple was located on the same spot as Solomon's temple.

**BT ARTICLE:** And where was this spot? We read in 2 Chronicles 3:1 that "Solomon began to build the house of the Lord [the temple] 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." The account of King David purchasing the threshing floor of Ornan is recorded in 1 Chronicles 21:14-22:1.

A brief overview of the geography of Jerusalem is helpful at this point. The Jebusite city that David captured and chose as his capital, naming it Jerusalem, was a walled city located on a narrow ridge that tapered to a point as it descended in elevation from north to south. As the ridge gained elevation to the north, it widened and somewhat flattened—though it was still highest near the center of the ridge.

The Jebusite city was well-fortified with strong walls, behind which its defenders felt confident enough to mock David's soldiers, telling them that blind and lame men could prevent an army from entering the city (2 Samuel 5:6-8). The walled city, which would come to be known as "the city of David" following its capture (verse 9), was quite small, covering only about nine acres atop the ridge. Steep valleys on the east, west and south sides helped make the city virtually impregnable. Archaeological excavations in recent years have uncovered strong defensive towers that protected the city's water source, the Gihon Spring at the base of the ridge that emptied into the Kidron Valley between the ridge and the Mount of Olives to the east.

As noted above, the temple was built on the site of a threshing floor. What was a threshing floor? It was an open area where wheat and barley would be threshed to crack open the husks to separate the kernels so they could be ground into flour for bread. The wheat and barley husks were typically cracked open by the hooves of an animal walking on them (Deuteronomy 25:4) or by a weighted sledge pulled by such animals. The mixed grain and husks were then tossed in the air, often with a large flat basket called a winnowing fan, and wind would blow the lighter husks away while the heavier grain fell back into the basket for collection (see Ruth 3:2; Isaiah 41:16; Matthew 3:12).

Threshing floors were typically located on hilltops or large open areas where the wind would blow away the husks (chaff, as it's called in the Bible). The fact that the temple was built on the site of a threshing floor tells us that it was built outside the city of David, because locating a threshing floor within city walls would've been self-defeating—the city walls and buildings would've blocked the wind necessary for separating the grain from

the husks. Also, one would never locate a threshing floor near a town's water source, as the windblown chaff would blow into the water, unnecessarily polluting it with foul-tasting chaff.

The Bible itself confirms that the location of the threshing floor on which the temple was built was "up"—higher in elevation—from the City of David (2 Samuel 24:18-19). In light of the geography of the ridge on which the city was built, which widened and gained in elevation to the north, this makes the area to the north the only area in which a temple could be built—especially since the city was surrounded by steep valleys on the other three sides. (This is also the only logical location for a threshing floor, as the higher location would be outside the city walls and could take advantage of the wind needed to blow away the chaff.)

**RESPONSE:** The Gihon Spring is located over half way down the eastern slope of the City of David. The Temple, according to the alternative viewpoint, was located at the top of the slope above the Gihon Spring to its west and a retaining wall was built out past the edge of the ridge and down to enclose the spring within the complex. If the threshing floor was at the top of the eastern slope there would have been enough distance not to blow into the spring.

The Temple complex was 600 feet wide. The location of the altar was the location of the threshing floor (2 Samuel 24:18). It is possible it could have been just outside of the walls directly west of the Gihon Spring. David may have then extended the original Jebusite walls further west to incorporate the site of the threshing floor as part of expanding the ridge further west to allow a greater population to live within the walls.

Before the Millo (fill-in) construction in Solomon's reign (1 Kings 9:24, 11:27) the ridge dipped sharply in elevation between the citadel (midway down the City of David ridge) and the Ophel (in the north of the City of David). The citadel was higher in David's day but was cut down in the time of the Hasmoneans. The Ophel was like a hilltop before the Millo levelled out the ground in between the citadel and the Ophel. The Ophel hill top is the alternate Temple site west and up the slope from the Gihon Spring.

It is a fair point of logic to claim it was outside the city walls so wind could blow away the chaff. This is a good strong point in favour of the traditional viewpoint. That said, it is not an absolute requirement for a threshing floor to be outside the city walls to still be functional.

**This is a point of supporting proof NOT critical proof like Eleazar's testimony we saw before and therefore has less weight than Eleazar's much clearer eyewitness testimony.**

While most of the Haram is flat enough to have been a threshing floor there is no way that the place of the Dome of the Rock where Leen Ritmeyer favours as the spot for the Holy of holies was the threshing floor. **Such a jagged natural rock would never have been a threshing floor.**

2 Samuel 24:18 does not say that "the temple was built was 'up'—higher in elevation—from the City of David" as claimed. The prophet Gad told David to go up to the threshing floor from where he was, meaning likely his palace.

**BT ARTICLE:** The Bible also tells us that after Solomon had finished building the temple and it was to be dedicated, he and the elders of Israel brought the Ark of the Covenant "up...from the city of David" to the temple (1 Kings 8:1, emphasis added throughout).

The fact that the ark was moved up from the City of David means that it was brought "out of the City of David" (King James Version, Green's Literal Translation, English Standard Version, New Revised Standard Version and various others) to the newly constructed temple.

The biblical account mentions eight times in 1 Kings 8 and the parallel account in 2 Chronicles 5 that they brought the ark up from the City of David to the temple—proving that the temple was uphill and out of David's city—exactly where the Temple Mount is and has been for almost 3,000 years.

We see from these passages that any argument that the temple stood within the area of the original City of David is directly contradicted by plain statements of Scripture. These passages also prove that the temple couldn't have been located directly atop the Gihon Spring, because the Gihon Spring is located downhill from the City of David toward the Kidron Valley at an elevation more than 100 feet below that of the city.

**RESPONSE:** The Gihon Spring appears to be where the tabernacle was in David's reign assuming Zadok didn't travel far with the horn of oil that he got from the tabernacle.

"So Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet, Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, the Cherethites, and the Pelethites went down and had Solomon ride on King David's mule, and **took him to Gihon. Then Zadok the priest took a horn of oil from the tabernacle and anointed Solomon.** And they blew the horn, and all the people said, "Long live King Solomon!" (1 Kings 1:38-39).

1 Kings 8:1 is perhaps the strongest point in favour of the traditional Temple viewpoint which states "they might bring up the ark of the covenant of the LORD **OUT of the city of David, which is Zion.**"

So how else might we explain the comment that the Ark was brought out of the City of David?

**Another reasonable possibility is that it was brought out of the city to where the Haram is today since ALL the men of Israel (1 Kings 8:2) came to celebrate and they needed more room than the small City of David to celebrate before taking the ark into its new place in the Temple back in the City of David a few verses later (1 Kings 8:6).**

**BT ARTICLE:** Archaeological evidence for the Temple Mount being the Temple location: Jewish ritual baths It's odd to feel a need to argue that the structure recognized for the last 2,000 years as the foundation platform for Herod's Temple is exactly that, since it is in itself 36 acres of proof. Nonetheless we'll recap some of the archaeological proof that this was indeed the actual temple location.

One of the most striking proofs that the Temple Mount was considered a holy place is the large number of Jewish ritual purification baths, called mikvot or mikva'ot (plural of mikveh), all around the Temple Mount. So far more than 100 have been found, ranging in size from being able to accommodate one person at a time to dozens or a hundred or more worshippers at once. (Incidentally, this large number of mikvot explains how the apostles were able to find sufficient water to baptize 3,000 people in one day on the Feast of Pentecost as described in Acts 2:41.)

During Jesus' time it was common for worshippers going up to the temple to ritually immerse themselves in water so they could enter the temple precincts in a ritually pure state. Incidentally, this practice of ritual washing was carried over to a number of synagogues in Israel where similar mikvot have been found dating to this period—and the practice has been continued at many synagogues elsewhere in the centuries since.

Archaeologist Eilat Mazar describes what was uncovered in the excavations along the southern and western walls of the Temple Mount overseen by her grandfather, noted archaeologist Benjamin Mazar: "Dozens [of] ritual baths dating to the Herodian period were found throughout the excavation site. Rock-cut channels directed water into the baths from the surplus in the colossal cisterns on the Temple Mount...Each bath had one entrance with stairs and a low parapet in the center that separated those entering for purification from those leaving after purification" (The Complete Guide to the Temple Mount Excavations, 2002, p. 61).

Wherever archaeologists have excavated around the Temple Mount, all over the south and west sides and in what little digging has been done to the north, they have found Jewish ritual baths dating to the first centuries B.C. and A.D. The only area they haven't found them is on the east side, where a large Muslim cemetery prevents any archaeological exploration.

**RESPONSE:** Mikvah baths to the south of the Haram are in between the traditional and alternative Temple locations and are no issue for the alternate Temple viewpoint. Many of those to the west and south west have been found in priestly homes.

Mikvah baths to the north of the Haram are ironically a problem for the traditional Temple viewpoint. Josephus states that Fort Antonia was to the north of the Temple, a fact not disputed by anyone BUT he also tells us that the Fort was a massive complex FAR larger than the small tower seen in most diagrams and the famous model of first century Jerusalem. Josephus states:

"There was a fortress [Antonia] adjoining the **north side of the temple**, which, as I said, was formerly called Baris... **The inward parts had the largeness and form of a palace**, it being parted into all kinds of rooms and other conveniences, such as courts, and places for bathing, and **broad spaces for camps** [military training areas]; insomuch that, by having all conveniences that cities wanted, **it might seem to be composed**



**of several cities.** By its magnificence it seemed a palace...**for there always lay in this tower a Roman legion...**" (Wars of the Jews, Book 5, Chapter 5, Verse 8).

G.J. Wightman states in his book "The Walls of Jerusalem" that a typical Roman camp had: "a typically square plan and enclosed an area of about 400 x 500 meters [1250 by 1600 feet]. Roman military camps were normally divided into four quadrants by two main streets intersecting at right angles: the Cardo Maximus running N/S and the Decumanus Maximus running E/W" (p.195).

**This is roughly the same size as the whole Haram. Josephus also plainly stated that it always housed a whole Roman legion of 6000 soldiers (not to mention additional support staff).**

**IF the traditional Temple viewpoint is correct then the WHOLE north east section of the Old City would have been Fort Antonia, not the pokey small tower shown in most diagrams of Jerusalem in Jesus' day! And if that be the case why would there be Jewish mikvah baths to the north in the Roman Fort Antonia?**

**BT ARTICLE:** Recently it was revealed from long-hidden historical records that after a 1927 earthquake in Jerusalem damaged the Al-Aqsa Mosque on the Temple Mount, British archaeologist Robert Hamilton discovered and documented the remains of a first-century Jewish mikveh underneath its floor—a find kept hidden for almost a century so as not to arouse Muslim anger at such clear evidence of Jewish worship on the Temple Mount.

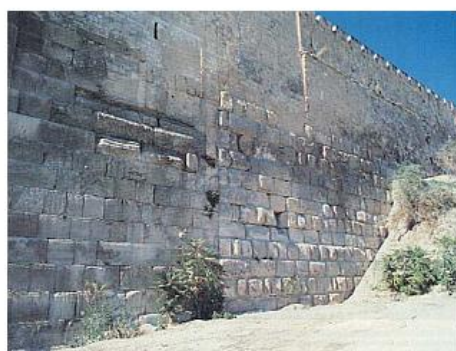
Of course, all of these dozens of Jewish ritual baths surrounding and atop the Temple Mount make no sense if this was the Antonia Fortress, as those who wish to relocate the temple try to argue. It makes no sense that Jews would've been ritually bathing themselves all around a Roman military fortress—but it makes perfect sense if they were purifying themselves before ascending to the temple to worship.

**RESPONSE:** Scott Ashley will later discuss Roman coins found under the corner of the southwest corner of the Haram dated to 17 AD after Herod the Great had died who had built Fort Antonia. There is a simple answer to both the mystery of the Roman coins under the southwest corner of the Haram dated to 17 AD and the mikvah baths under the Al-Aqsa Mosque.

**Visible from outside the south eastern wall of the Haram is a seam in the wall. Kathleen Kenyon measured it at 107 feet from the SE corner. The Haram south of the seam (which includes the Al-Aqsa Mosque) is a later extension to the original Haram. It was part of Jewish Jerusalem before the Haram was later extended.**

Ernest Martin in his book "The Temples That Jerusalem Forgot" believed that the Byzantine emperor Justinian was the one who extended the Haram for the Church of Mary (the Nea Church) that he built in Jerusalem.

He quotes Procopius who said: "But this church alone stands in a different position; for the Emperor Justinian ordered it to be built upon the highest of the hills...The Emperor has added another portion to the original hill."



**THE SEAM**



Adapted from a photograph by Bible Places

**BT ARTICLE:** In stark contrast, in many excavation sites over many years of digging, no such baths—or any evidence of any kind of Jewish worship practice—have been found where some would relocate the temple above the Gihon Spring.

**RESPONSE:** This statement has been proven to be incorrect by recent excavations. Very close to the Gihon spring several adjacent rooms cut into the bedrock have been found showing clear evidence of Jewish worship practice.

One room has v-shaped grooves in the floor, perhaps used to anchor legs of a table and at waist height in the nearby wall are two notches for feeding a rope through to tie up an animal that was going to be sacrificed.

Another room has a raised area with a drain that appears to be for draining blood from an animal sacrifice. A third room has a circular indentation with an inner circle that archaeologists believe was used as an olive press and olive oil was essential for anointing. This worship area is believed to pre-date Solomon's Temple and be from the time of David when the Tabernacle was at the Gihon Spring.



Up the top of the slope from the Gihon Spring the area is unable to be excavated as yet due to the presence of Arab residential houses. It is illegal under Islamic law to sell land to Jews but the Jewish authorities there are doing their utmost to work around this and acquire as much of the original City of David as possible.



Tacitus, the Roman historian gives us this statement about the Temple:

"The Temple resembled a fortress and had its own walls, which were more laboriously constructed than the others. Even the colonnades with which it was surrounded formed an admirable outer defense. **IT CONTAINED AN INEXHAUSTIBLE SPRING**" (Tacitus, History, V, 11-12).

**The only spring in Jerusalem was the Gihon Spring and Tacitus explicitly states the spring was within the Temple complex!**

Aristeas, a Jew from Egypt who visited Jerusalem about fifty years after the time of Alexander the Great gave a detailed description of the Temple and Jerusalem in which he states the following:

"There is an inexhaustible reservoir of water, as would be expected from an abundant spring **gushing up naturally from within** [the Temple]".

Notice these two prophecies about the Millennial Temple:

Ezekiel 47:1: "Then he brought me back to the door of the temple; and **there was water, flowing from under the threshold of the temple toward the east**, for the front of the temple faced east; the water was flowing from under the right side of the temple, south of the altar."

Joel 3:18: "And it will come to pass in that day that the mountains shall drip with new wine, the hills shall flow with milk, and all the brooks of Judah shall be flooded with water; **a fountain shall flow from the house of the LORD** and water the Valley of Acacias."

Based on those verses which location is more likely to be the location of the millennial Temple – the Haram which just has cisterns or above the Gihon Spring which anciently watered the Kidron Valley?

It appears that the tabernacle was at Gihon when Solomon was anointed and in the millennium it will be above a spring.

**The symbolism of living water** (NOT stagnant water from cisterns) appears to be a requirement for God's dwelling place. "And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb" (Revelation 22:1)

**BT ARTICLE:** Finds corresponding with Josephus' temple description Flavius Josephus (ca. A.D. 37-100) was a prolific first-century Jewish scholar, historian and priest intimately familiar with Jerusalem and the temple and the war in which both were destroyed by the Romans. In his writings he gives many descriptions of the temple that allow us to correlate it with the Temple Mount, but we'll focus only on a few archaeological finds.

Josephus records that the outer court of the temple complex, known as the Court of the Gentiles (into which gentiles could enter), "was encompassed by a stone wall for a partition, with an inscription, which forbade any foreigner to go in, under pain of death" (Antiquities of the Jews, Book 15, chap. 11, sec. 5). In his work Wars of the Jews, he states there were a number of these signs on this wall, "some in Greek, and some in Roman letters, that 'no foreigner should go within that sanctuary'" (Book 5, chap. 5, sec. 5).

Two of these stone "do not enter" signs, one complete and the other with the ends missing, have been found. The complete one was found in 1871 about 150 feet from the Temple Mount, and the partial one was found in 1935 in an excavation about 200 feet north of the northeast corner of the Temple Mount platform. Both were found reused in other structures, showing how ancient building materials were often scavenged and reused in other ways. The carved Greek inscription on the complete copy, spelling out what Josephus summarized, reads: "No foreigner may enter within the balustrade around the sanctuary and the enclosure. Whoever is caught, on himself shall he put blame for the death which will ensue."

**RESPONSE:** Scott Ashley states "Both were found reused in other structures" so the locations they were found have no bearing whatsoever on the correct location of the Temple.

**BT ARTICLE:** Josephus also describes a part of the temple complex "where it was custom for one of the priests to stand and to give notice, by sound of trumpet, in the afternoon of the approach, and on the following

evening of the close, of every seventh day" (Wars of the Jews, Book 4, chap. 9, sec. 12). For this trumpet blast announcing of the beginning and ending of the Sabbath day to be meaningful, it logically must have taken place at a part of the temple where it could be heard through much of the city.

In 1968, Hebrew University archaeologist Benjamin Mazar found a large carved stone in the rubble of the destruction of the temple complex at the southwest corner of the Temple Mount platform, which in the first century overlooked most of the city. The stone was buried at the bottom of the rubble from some of the temple's outer buildings, meaning it had likely fallen from the very top of the structures built around the edges of the platform.

Carved in elaborate Hebrew script on the stone were the words, "To the trumpeting place to declare..." with the remainder of the inscription broken off and lost. Temple experts believe that the full inscription read, "To the trumpeting place to declare the Sabbath," and that the stone fell from the spot to which Josephus referred—particularly since the broken stone fit perfectly onto a much larger block of stone that had a niche carved out just the right size for a man to stand in.

**RESPONSE:** The implication according to archaeologists about the Trumpeting place stone is that it fell from the SW corner of the Haram. As stones and rubble have been moved around and reused this is no definitive proof the Haram was the Temple.

As noted earlier the southernmost part of the Haram was extended at a date later than 17 AD. The area to the south of the Haram's original southern edge was Jewish as seen in the excavations of the first century street.

**BT ARTICLE:** Josephus also describes the western side of the temple platform as having four entrance points, one accessed by a bridge crossing the Tyropean Valley to Jerusalem's wealthy upper city, two that opened to the rest of the city, and a fourth involving "a great number of steps" located "where the road descended down into the valley" (Antiquities of the Jews, Book 15, chap. 11, sec. 5).

Today in the Western Wall one can see remains of these four entrances to the Temple Mount exactly as Josephus explained them. Named after famous Jerusalem archaeologists, they are called, respectively, Wilson's Arch (the remains of a bridge crossing the Tyropean Valley), Warren's Gate, Barclay's Gate, and Robinson's Arch, which is the remains of a massive staircase that indeed had "a great number of steps" leading down to the first-century "road [that] descended down into the valley"—exactly as Josephus describes.

Josephus further describes an astoundingly impressive colonnade "better than any other under the sun" running along the southern top of the temple platform (ibid.). Benjamin Mazar's finds from his excavations along the southern wall of the Temple Mount from 1968-1978 again matched the description given by Josephus:

"Numerous fragments of such pilasters [rectangular pillars set into walls] and their capitals, as well as pieces from two stone sundials, together with fragments from other architectural elements including friezes, panels, cornices...some of which fell from the top of the wall and some from the Royal Portico [a huge columned structure that ran along the top of the southern wall of the Temple Mount], were found in abundance among the debris which had accumulated along the area facing the whole length of the South Wall and close to the Western Wall.

"These fragments bear typical Herodian decorations comprising the rich variety of geometric as well as floral patterns characteristic of the artistic repertoire of the period" (The Mountain of the Lord: Excavating in Jerusalem, 1975, pp. 121-124).

Josephus also added that the southern side of the temple platform had "gates in the middle." Today one can visit the Temple Mount and see two sets of gates, known as the Double Gate and Triple Gate, in the middle of the walls—exactly as Josephus places them. (Josephus lists "one large gate" on the east side and doesn't specify a number for the north side—but these areas today lie underneath a Muslim cemetery and the Muslim portion of the city, and no excavations have been carried out along these walls.)

Regrettably, since the Temple Mount has been in the hands of Muslim authorities, they have allowed no meaningful archaeological exploration in this or the last century. In fact, there is abundant evidence of Muslim authorities destroying ancient remains on the Temple Mount, presumably to erase any evidence of a Jewish presence there. So due to the impossibility of any scientific exploration of the Temple Mount anytime soon,



other evidence lying beneath its surface that would further confirm this as the temple location must remain a mystery.

**RESPONSE:** Wilson's Arch is far too north to have included a bridge over the Tyropean Valley which starts going south from just past the Wailing Wall. The Tyropean Valley is the valley between the City of David and the Upper City to the west. A western entrance to a Temple further south in the City of David would have indeed been close to the Tyropean Valley and a bridge to the Upper City would fit this location than further north at the Haram.

Robinson's Arch is small rectangular notch and the staircase seen in diagrams of first century Jerusalem is a major extrapolation based on a very small remnant attached to the wall. It is south of the seam that was a later extension to the Haram and Justinian is the most likely Roman emperor to have carried that out after Rome converted to Christianity.

Procopius said: "But this church (the Nea Church) alone stands in a different position; for the Emperor Justinian **ordered it to be built upon the highest of the hills...The Emperor has added an other portion to the original hill.**"

George Wesley Buchanan writes the following about Roman items found in the Haram:

"Moreover, archaeologists have...found an image of a soldier on a horse, **a brick with the mark of the 10th legion on it, and an image of Mars, the Roman god of war. They have also found in the Haram an inscription once carved over an arch, honoring Titus and Vespasian** for their leadership in the war of 66–72 AD. This would not have been made until the war was over in 72 AD. **Another inscription that was intended to fit on the interior wall of the Haram honored Hadrian, the Roman emperor who defeated Bar Cochba** in the revolt that ended in 135 AD.

"The temple was one of the earliest buildings destroyed in the City of David (around 70 AD). These inscriptions were made and installed after the temple had been destroyed. They could not have belonged to a non-existent temple. They were only appropriate in a Roman fortress, the Antonia" (In Search of King Solomon's Temple, p.11)

**BT ARTICLE:** Archaeology disproves any temple above the Gihon Spring: In the first century A.D., when some argue that the Jerusalem temple was located on the ridge above the Gihon Spring, what was that area like? From 1995 until his retirement in 2011, University of Haifa professor Ronny Reich, recipient of multiple awards for his outstanding contributions to the field of archaeology, was co-director of excavations in the City of David. In that capacity he oversaw archaeological explorations all around the Gihon Spring, including the steep slopes of the ridge on which the City of David lay. His findings contributed a great deal to our understanding of the history of the area.

So what did he find in this area where some would place the Jerusalem temples? In his 2011 book *Excavating the City of David: Where Jerusalem's History Began*, Dr. Reich explains what they had to dig through all around the Gihon Spring: "8-9 m[eters] of soil, stone clusters, [pottery] sherds and fragments of finds—all spilled down across the eastern slopes of the City of David..." He describes how a similar "thick overlay" covered other nearby sites excavated by previous archaeologists.

What was this "thick overlay" of material? "... This was a huge amount of debris, in the realm of hundreds of thousands of cubic meters. It was not long before we realized that we had been dealing all along with the Jerusalem city dump from the **END of the Second Temple period**"—i.e., from the time of Herod's temple (pp. 219-220).

So rather than this being the site of Herod's glorious temple where Jesus Christ visited and taught, the area above and around the Gihon Spring was actually the site of the city dump in Jesus' day!

**RESPONSE:** The last sentence here DOES NOT say what Dr Reich was just quoted as saying. Dr Reich said that it was "the Jerusalem city dump from the **END of the Second Temple period**".

**This is AFTER the Roman destruction in 70 AD NOT the time of Jesus Christ as claimed by Scott straight after!** I am surprised that this glaring mistake wasn't picked up by the many reviewers I know check the Beyond Today articles before they are published!



In fact, this archaeological finding of the area becoming a refuse dump after the Roman destruction is **exactly** what Jerome wrote about the Temple site:

"Our holy and our beautiful house, where our fathers praised thee, is burned up with fire; and all our pleasant things are laid waste': **and the Temple which earned reverence throughout the world has become the refuse dump of the new city** whose founder [Hadrian] called it Aelia [that is, Hadrian called his new city Aelia Capitolina] (Quoted by Moshe Gil, A History of Palestine 634-1099, p.67).

The Haram has NEVER been a refuse dump since the first century as Jerome stated. Notice what Eusebius tells us about the Temple site centuries after the Roman destruction:

"The hill called Zion and Jerusalem, the buildings there, that is to say, the Temple, the Holy of Holies, the Altar, and whatever else was there dedicated to the glory of God, have been utterly removed or shaken [down], in fulfillment of the Word. Utter desolation has possessed the land. Their once famous Mount Sion instead of being as it once was, the center of study and education based on the divine prophecies, which the children of the Hebrews of old, their godly prophets, priests and national teachers loved to interpret, IS A ROMAN FARM like the rest of the country.

**"YEA, WITH MY OWN EYES I HAVE SEEN THE BULLS PLOWING THERE, AND THE SACRED SITE SOWN WITH SEED."**

Here we have a plain reference to the Temple site at this time being used as farmland! The Haram has had a stone platform from the time of Christ and therefore could not be the site Eusebius refers to as the Temple site!

God Himself prophesied that the Temple site would be BARE and plowed like a field in Micah 3:12.

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

In all fairness, this prophecy could refer to the time after the Babylonian destruction but we also have Eusebius' eyewitness testimony where he indicates it was fulfilled after the Roman destruction as well.

**BT ARTICLE:** Additional archaeological excavation reports show that during the period of Solomon's temple, this same slope was covered with agricultural terraces of the same kind seen all around Jerusalem today for growing olive trees—again showing the impossibility of the temple being located here.

In addition to these excavations all around and above the Gihon Spring—including at least eight where some would mistakenly relocate the temple—archaeologists have dug through all levels of human occupation in many nearby areas of the City of David, and nothing remotely indicates the Jerusalem temple having been located there, as some imagine. In spite of many decades of digging dating back to 1867—more than 150 years ago—nothing remotely resembling the remains of a temple have been found.

There is simply zero evidence to support the idea that a temple ever existed above or near the Gihon Spring—and the extensive excavations that have been conducted there conclusively prove the temples of the Bible never existed there. If the clear evidence from the ground weren't enough, both the Mishnah (a compilation of the Jewish oral law and tradition of temple times, including detailed descriptions of the temple, written down later in the second and third centuries) and Josephus place the size of the temple platform at 500 and 600 cubits, respectively—meaning it was some 900 to 2,000 feet wide, depending on the version of cubit used.

**RESPONSE:** I have already shown the evidence for a worship area close to the Gihon Spring and, as mentioned previously, Arab houses now occupy the area to the west and up the slope from the Gihon Spring.

It is stated that the slope was covered with agricultural terraces during Solomon's time. Scott does not quote the reports specifically stating where on the eastern slope of the City of David these agricultural remains were. The Temple, as I will shortly quote from Josephus' own words, was a square 600 feet on each side. The eastern slope of the City of David is at least 10 times this length in total so there's plenty of room on the eastern slopes apart from the Temple for terraces.

Josephus states that each side of the Temple was a stade (600 feet) NOT 600 cubits wide as claimed. Josephus wrote:

"This hill [Temple platform] was walled all round, and in compass four stades [a stade was 600 feet], each angle [side] containing in length a stade [600 feet]. But within this wall and on the very top of all, there ran another wall of stone also having on the east quarter a double cloister [colonnade] of the same length with the wall; in the midst of which was the Temple itself" (Antiquities of the Jews, Book 15, Chapter 11, verse 3).

**The circumference of the Temple was 4 stades and each side was 1 stade long. A stade is close to 600 feet long.** Wikipedia states that a Roman stade was 185 m (607.14 feet).

**BT ARTICLE:** Locating a structure of that size atop the ridge on which the City of David lay is a physical impossibility—it would extend over and block large portions of the valleys on either side (including covering the first-century street that ran through the valley on the western side of the ridge). And if placed directly over the Gihon Spring, it would've completely dammed up the Kidron Valley (for which again there is zero evidence!).

And we know from archaeology that these areas were inhabited and used for centuries when, according to this proposed deep beneath the temple's foundation! Again, the physical evidence shows the impossibility of this idea having any validity.

**RESPONSE:** Scott states "it would extend over and block large portions of the valleys on either side". This might be the case with the exaggerated width he quotes (600 cubits) but not with the actual width (600 feet).

Scott also states "And if placed directly over the Gihon Spring, it would've completely dammed up the Kidron Valley". This is a wild exaggeration based on the inaccurate 2000 feet maximum width shown to be false by Josephus.

**BT ARTICLE:** Why the Temple Mount couldn't be the Antonia Fortress: Those who theorize that the temple was located over the Gihon Spring in the City of David have to come up with an alternative explanation for the identity of what is now identified as the Temple Mount platform. They label it the Antonia Fortress, a military fortification constructed by Herod the Great and named in honor of his friend and supporter Mark Anthony, one of the generals of Julius Caesar.

But there are a number of reasons why this is illogical and inconsistent with known facts. One of the biggest problems with this idea is that Josephus plainly states that the Antonia Fortress adjoined the northwest corner of the temple platform. In Wars of the Jews, he writes, "Now as to the tower of Antonia, it was situated at the corner of two cloisters [colonnades] of the court of the temple; of that on the west, and that on the north" (Book 5, chap. 5, sec. 8). He later mentions "the north-west cloister [colonnade of the temple], which was joined to the tower of Antonia" (Wars of the Jews, Book 6, chap. 2, sec. 9).

However, the Gihon Spring, over which they would place the temple, is some 900 feet to the south of the Temple Mount platform and in no way joins to it. To resolve this, they have to read into Josephus' account a 600-foot bridge from one location to the other—a bridge for which there is, once again, zero archaeological or historical evidence.

There are many other problems with this theory. Of the 55 times Josephus refers to the Antonia Fortress, 44 times he calls it "the tower Antonia" (the other times he refers to it simply as "Antonia"). The Temple Mount platform is a 36-acre flat level structure that is in no sense a "tower," as Josephus repeatedly calls the Antonia Fortress.

**RESPONSE:** Rather than just look at one quote of Josephus as noted in the article let's compare two quotes of Josephus:

"This hill [Temple platform] was walled all round, and **in compass 4 stades** [a stade was 600 feet], each angle [side] containing in length a stade [600 feet]" (Antiquities of the Jews, Book 15, Chapter 11, verse 3).

"The cloisters [of the outmost court] were in breadth 30 cubits, while the **entire compass of it was by measure 6 stades including the tower of Antonia**" (Wars of the Jews, Book 5, Chapter 5, Verse 2).

The second quote includes two other stades that are **NOT** a part of the square shape of the Temple. Josephus says that these two extra stades of colonnades were a part of the Antonia complex.

**IF these two 600 feet long colonnades lay in between the Temple and the SW tower of the fort they were considered a PART of the Antonia complex hence why Josephus states that the Antonia complex adjoined the Temple.**

Josephus wrote of a time that Agrippa spoke during the war and said: **“you have cut off the cloisters [of the temple] from joining to the tower Antonia”** (Wars of the Jews, Book 2, Chapter 16, Verse 5). While there is a little ambiguity this comment seems to imply these cloisters (colonnades) were appendages that joined between the Temple and Fort Antonia.

Another statement by Josephus adds more indirect support the colonnades were appendages joining the Temple and Fort Antonia when he wrote: “In the mean time, the Jews were so distressed by the fights they had been in, as the war advanced higher and higher, and creeping up to the holy house itself, that they, as it were, **cut off those limbs of their body** which were infected, in order to prevent the distemper’s spreading further; **for they set the north-west cloister, which was joined to the tower of Antonia, on fire”** (Wars of the Jews, Book 6, Chapter 2, Verse 9).

**This wasn’t the north colonnade nor the west collonade of the Temple but the north-west cloister (colonnade) implying the limb or appendage that connected the Temple and Fort Antonia!**

Josephus did consistently use the term tower for the Antonia fortress and this does seem anachronistic with an area the size of the Haram but the use of the term should not be pulled out of context without considering what else Josephus said about it:

“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 50 cubits high; whereas that which lay upon the southeast corner was 70 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 [6 000 soldiers plus support staff])** went several ways among the cloisters” (Wars of the Jews, Book 5, Chapter 5, Verse 8).

**BT ARTICLE:** Another huge problem with identifying the Temple Mount platform as the Antonia Fortress is the large number of gates, entrances, bridges and massive staircases providing entry to the structure—at least 10 entrances that we know of. A fortress by definition is intended to keep people out. Who builds a fortress with 10 entry points that must be defended? Obviously no one! A fortress is built with a minimum number of entrances, otherwise it defeats its very purpose as a defensive structure.

A further argument concerning these entrances is the fact that some of the southern wall entrances opened into long passageways that originally allowed worshippers to exit onto the top of the platform near the temple.

Years ago, before these passageways were permanently closed to non-Muslims, photographs and architectural drawings showed them to be adorned with beautiful columns and elegant domes decorated with carved stone vines and geometric designs—with no depictions of people or animals, which were forbidden according to Jewish law.

Such elaborate and enormously expensive decorative stonework wouldn’t be found in a military installation, but is very much in keeping with contemporary descriptions of the temple’s elegant beauty in every area. Fragments of similar elegant stonework have been found around the Temple Mount amid the rubble of its destruction.

**RESPONSE:** Scott states “some of the southern wall entrances opened into long passageways that originally allowed worshippers to exit onto the top of the platform near the temple.” These features may well have been a part of the Nea Church built by Justinian as they are south of the seam.

It is a fair comment that the number of entrances to the Haram is unusual for a fort. The Romans were not in Jerusalem to defend it from outside enemies. They were the outside enemies. They were the invaders who had entered the area and occupied the country by force.

**BT ARTICLE:** Yet another problem for this theory is the date of construction of the structure. In a 2011 excavation near the southwest corner of the Temple Mount, coins were found under the foundations of the Western Wall dating to A.D. 17-18. This find shows that the structure's massive walls were still under construction in the late teens A.D., decades after construction had started in the 18th year of Herod's reign in 22 B.C. (This discovery also confirms the statement in John 2:20 that at this time, in the late 20s A.D., the temple complex had been under construction for 46 years).

This discovery also proves that the Temple Mount is not the Antonia Fortress, which Herod the Great built and named for his friend and supporter Mark Antony. Herod built and completed the Antonia Fortress in his lifetime, well before his death around 4 B.C. The unearthing of coins dating to A.D. 17-18 under the wall foundations shows the impossibility of this being the Antonia Fortress, which had been completed at least two decades earlier.

**RESPONSE:** This is rather odd to say that this piece of evidence isn't a problem for the traditional Temple viewpoint. While the Temple was completed a few years later it is quite a stretch to say that the foundations of the walls of the Haram weren't begun until so very late into the construction of the Temple.

As mentioned previously, visible from outside the south eastern wall of the Haram is a seam from top to bottom. The Haram south of the seam (which includes the Al-Aqsa Mosque) is a later extension to the original Haram. It was part of Jewish Jerusalem before the Haram was later extended.

**BT ARTICLE:** When it comes to the actual location of Jerusalem's temples, the facts are clear. Theories that the temples were constructed above the Gihon Spring are just that—theories—and quite weak and seriously flawed theories at that. They are theories unsupported by any real evidence.

In fact, the only real evidence that exists directly contradicts these ideas—which is why no reputable archaeologist that we're aware of supports them. The actual evidence points to what has been accepted for the last 2,000 years—that the temples of Solomon and Herod were built on the Temple Mount exactly where history, tradition and archaeology place them.

Readers interested in learning more may read an interview we conducted with Leen Ritmeyer, perhaps the world's foremost authority on the architecture and archaeology of the Temple Mount, by searching for "Leen Ritmeyer" at [ucg.org/learnmore](http://ucg.org/learnmore).

Dr. Ritmeyer has been involved in several major excavations in Jerusalem, and his illustrations have appeared in many Bible-related books, atlases and academic journals. At his website [ritmeyer.com](http://ritmeyer.com) he regularly comments on significant archaeological finds from biblical times. He is the author or coauthor of several highly recommended books on Jerusalem, the temple and the Temple Mount, including *Jerusalem—The Temple Mount* (2015), *Jerusalem in the Year 30 A.D.* (2015), *The Quest: Revealing the Temple Mount in Jerusalem* (2012) and *Secrets of Jerusalem's Temple Mount* (2006).

**RESPONSE:** Scott states "Theories that the temples were constructed above the Gihon Spring are just that...They are theories unsupported by any real evidence."

Josephus, Eleazar and Tacitus would all beg to differ based on their eyewitness testimonies that were completely missed in the article. How they were is baffling given their incredible relevance and the fact that they are front and centre in all the papers, books and videos by those who propose the alternate Temple viewpoint. I would guess that Scott only had a general outline of the opposing point of view but didn't truly study the evidence marshalled by those who support the alternate Temple viewpoint before writing the article.

I am reminded of the proverb that says "The first in his cause seems just, but his neighbor comes and searches him" (Proverbs 18:17).

One last comparison between the two Temple viewpoints can be made through the prophecies of what is to come.

In 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4 we read: "...the man of sin shall be 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**, setting himself forth, that he is God."

A few verses later we read: "And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the breath of His mouth and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming, whose coming is according to the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders" (2 Thessalonians 2:8-9).

The man of sin, the lawless one, who work miracles and will be destroyed at the coming of the Lord is said to go **IN the TEMPLE** of God.

The Temple here is obviously not the church (which is also referred to as the Temple of God) as the false prophet (man of sin with miracle working powers) is not a part of the true church. The Temple in this passage is a physical building that the man of sin goes INTO. It's hard not to draw the conclusion that the Jews will rebuild another Temple that the man of sin will go into.

Daniel 12:11 appears to speak of an end-time abomination of desolation when sacrifices will be stopped.

Church of God ministers in the past put forth the idea that there might only just be an altar and not a Temple to fulfill the prophecy about an end-time abomination of desolation. There is a simple reason for why they took such a conservative position despite the plain reference to the man of sin going INTO a Temple in 2 Thessalonians 2:4.

It's so hard to reconcile this prophecy with the traditional Temple viewpoint of the Haram being the Temple site because the Dome of the Rock is there now and the Arabs would begin a full scale jihad if any attempt was made to replace the Muslim mosques on the traditional Temple Mount with a Jewish temple.

Daniel 11:40-45 speaks of conflict between the Beast power and the Muslim nations not between the Arabs and the Jews which would happen if any attempt was made to replace the Muslim mosques on the traditional Temple Mount with a Jewish temple.

Even an altar would be highly inflammatory as seen by the Muslim outbursts when Jews tried to lay a single foundation stone on the traditional Temple Mount and when Ariel Sharon went up into the traditional Temple Mount site where the Muslim mosques are.

IF the Jews were convinced of the alternate Temple viewpoint in the City of David it would be possible to build a Jewish Temple without anywhere near the same Muslim backlash.

So which Temple viewpoint is more likely to see a Temple rebuilt that will fulfill the prophecies about the end-time abomination of desolation – the Haram which has two Muslim mosques on or the City of David?

And which Temple viewpoint is more likely to be the location of the millennial Temple according to Ezekiel 47:1 and Joel 3:18 which speak of waters flowing from within the Temple – the Haram which just has cisterns or above the Gihon Spring which anciently watered the Kidron Valley?

Winston Churchill once said that "Truth is incontrovertible. Panic may resent it; ignorance may deride it; malice may distort it; but there it is!" He also said, "Men occasionally stumble over the truth, but most of them pick themselves up and hurry off as if nothing had happened".

As Christians we have to honestly deal with the evidence and not twist the evidence. We are to "Prove all things, hold fast to the good" (1 Thessalonians 5:21). We are to have a "love of the truth" (2 Thessalonians 2:10).

Once deep down we see any particular perception of the truth we might prefer to believe is not the real truth then we must reject our previous viewpoint and embrace the truth which might be a bitter pill to swallow at first.

The Apostle Paul was confronted with the truth of who the Messiah was which he previously rejected and hated and killed those who differed with him. When deep down he had to acknowledge Jesus was that Messiah, Paul, to his credit, swallowed his pride and turned around 180 degrees and we are so much richer for him having done so.

At times God may confront us with the reality that we are completely wrong on something we have invested emotionally in and He may require us to change 180 degrees. Will we do so and embrace the truth or hold on to believing man-made traditions and myths (2 Timothy 4:4)?