

THE
LOST
TEMPLE MOUNT



A YRM Publication

While some may interpret the contents and conclusions of this article as anti-Semitic, this could not be further from the truth. Yahweh's Restoration Ministry supports the nation of Israel and believes that the entire nation of Israel, including the traditional Temple Mount area, forthrightly belongs to the Jewish people. This article is only interested in the truth and how the facts impact Yahweh's prophetic Word.

Many assume that the Temple Mount within the old city of Jerusalem is where the Jewish or Old Testament temple originally stood. However, what if this was not the case? What if the temple was located elsewhere? The truth could affect the location of a future third temple.

There is a theory gaining popularity that places the temple not on the traditional Temple Mount, but instead within the city of David. In this publication we explore several points of this theory, including the connection between the City of David and the biblical temple mount, the critical role of the Gihon Spring, the destruction to the temple and to the city of Jerusalem as prophesied by Yahshua and chronicled by antiquity, existence of Fortress Antonia, and much more.

This Theory's Impact

However, before launching into the evidence supporting the temple as being located within the city of David, let us consider the importance of this theory. While this is not a salvational belief, it may have a far-reaching impact on



prophecy.

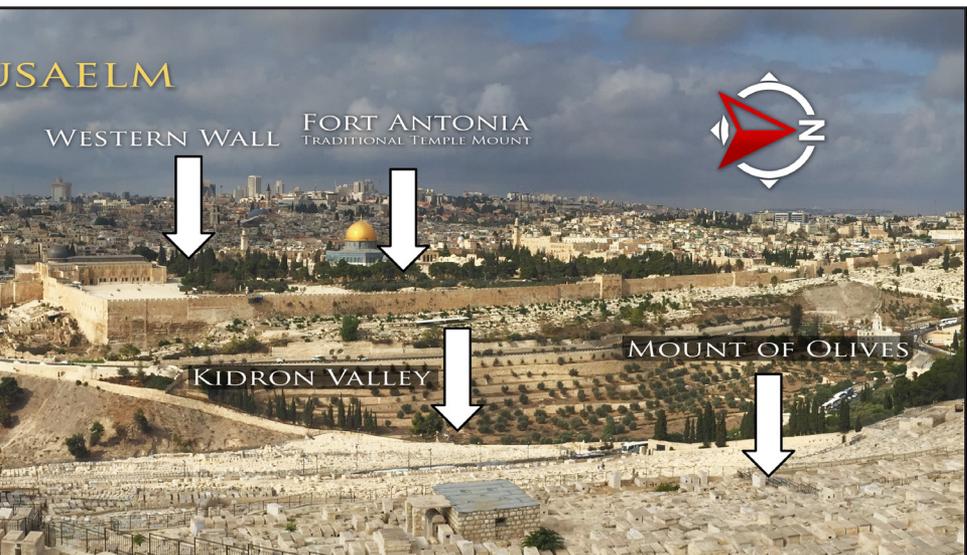
The traditional Temple Mount contains the Al-Aqsa Mosque and the Dome of the Rock. Both of these buildings are sacred to Islam. For this reason it's impossible today for the Jews to build a third temple on the Temple Mount. As a side note, Muslims call the Temple Mount the Haram esh-Sharif, meaning, "the Noble Sanctuary."

While it may not be possible for the Jews to rebuild a temple on today's Temple Mount (Matthew 24:15), nothing would hinder them from rebuilding within the City of David. However, for this to occur the Jews would also have to acknowledge that the current Temple Mount is not the location of the temple. Considering that the Temple Mount and its Wailing Wall, which is believed to be the outer western wall to the ancient temple, is the holiest site in Judaism, such acceptance would not be easy.

For the Jews to accept that the temple was not on the Temple Mount, but instead within the city of David, evidence would have to be found so conclusive that even the most ardent Jew could not reject this realization. While this may never happen, considering the current excavations occurring within the city of David, the thought of such evidence being found is within the realm of possibility.

Reviewing the Geography

In the picture below we can see several important geographical features, including the Mount of Olives, the traditional Temple Mount, the Kidron Valley, the



Central Valley, the Gihon Spring, and the current site for the city of David. Below is additional information on each of these locations:

The Mount of Olives is a mountain ridge on the east side of the city of Jerusalem. At one point it had olive trees covering its slopes. Today there is a Jewish cemetery with approximately 150,000 graves. This mountain ridge was a significant location during Yahshua's ministry. It was the place where He delivered His Olivet Prophecy and where He retreated hours before His death in the Garden of Gethsemane.

The traditional Temple Mount is where many believe the Jewish temple once stood. Both the Al-Aqsa Mosque, Islam's third holiest site, and the Dome of the Rock reside on the traditional Temple Mount.

The Kidron Valley separates Jerusalem, including the city of David and the traditional Temple Mount, from the Mount of Olives. This valley continues east through the Judean Desert and toward the Dead Sea.

The Central Valley, also called the Tyropoeon Valley and the Valley of the Cheesemakers, is a rugged ravine on the west side of the City of David or the ancient city of Jerusalem and marks its western boundary, as the Kidron Valley does on the east.

The Gihon Spring is along the Kidron Valley near the ancient City of David. The name "Gihon" comes from the Hebrew *gihu*, meaning, "gushing forth." It is one of the world's largest intermittent springs and made life possible for ancient Jerusalem. While the water from the spring was used for irrigation in



The lookout above is approximately where the temple would have stood. City of David, Jerusalem

the Kidron, it was also central to temple worship. We will explore the Gihon further in this publication.

The City of David is the location for the ancient Jebusite city that David conquered and renamed the City of David or Jerusalem. It is approximately 12 acres in size. It begins at the Millo (i.e., a ravine that separated the City of David from the Ophel, which Solomon filled in during his reign) and extends southward.

Today the City of David is an Israeli national park and a major archaeological site. Archaeologists have discovered many subterranean tunnels, reservoirs, and possibly an ancient room that was used for animal sacrifices. Also discovered beneath the City of David is Hezekiah's Tunnel and the Gihon Spring. On the southwest side of the city is the Pool of Siloam.

City of the David = Zion

We begin our investigating of the real temple mount by turning to the Bible. As with so many other truths, Yahweh's Word holds the key in unlocking the truth as to where the original temple stood. Following is a compilation of Scripture confirming that the City of David and Mount Zion (i.e., the location of the temple) are synonymous:

"Nevertheless David took the strong hold of Zion: the same is the city of David," 2Samuel 5:7. This passage clearly states that Zion and the city of David are the same. This point is critically important, as Scripture also shows that Mount Zion was the location of the temple.

"And the inhabitants of Jebus said to David, Thou shalt not come hither. Nevertheless David took the castle of Zion, which is the city of David," 1Chronicles 11:5. As noted in the previous passage, 1Chronicles 11 confirms that Zion is also the City of David. The word "castle" here comes from the Hebrew *matsuwd* and refers to a place of defense. Because Jebus was located between the Kidron and Central valleys, it was a well defensible area.

"In Salem also is his tabernacle, and his dwelling place in Zion," Psalm 76:2. The word "Salem" derives from the Hebrew *shalem*. Strong's states that this word is "an early name of Jerusalem." This passage is critically important, as it shows a connection between the ancient City of David, the temple, and Zion and offers indisputable evidence for the temple location within ancient Jerusalem and not on the Haram esh-Sharif, or Temple Mount.

Remember that the old City of David was only a 12-acre plot of land between the Kidron and Central valleys. It did not include the 36-acre Temple Mount located a third of a mile north. The current Temple Mount platform was developed much later.

Using only the Bible as a roadmap and knowing the location for the ancient City of David, a strong case can be made that the temple was within the City of David and not on today's Temple Mount. However, this is only the tip of the iceberg.

The Akra, Millo, and Ophel

When it comes to the location of the temple, there are three terms to understand – the Akra, Millo, and Ophel. The Akra was another name of the City of David. The Millo was a ravine that King Solomon filled in. And the Ophel is where the temple was likely located.

In 2Samuel 5:9 we find a description of the boundaries of ancient Jerusalem during the reign of King David: “So David dwelt in the fort, and called it the city of David. And David built round about from Millo and inward.”

The word “fort” refers to the impregnability of the City of David. This was owing to its location between the Kidron and Tyropoeon valleys. We see that David built his city from the Millo inward. This ravine separated ancient Jerusalem from the Ophel.

Scripture shows that Solomon later filled in this ravine: “And this was the cause that he lifted up his hand against the king: Solomon built Millo, and repaired the breaches of the city of David his father,” 1Kings 11:27.

The word “repaired” here comes from the Hebrew *cagar* and is a primitive root, meaning, “to shut up,” Strong's. By filling in the Millo, Solomon connected the City of David with the Ophel.

This is why Psalm 122:3 describes Jerusalem as a city “compact together.” The word “compact” comes from the Hebrew *chabar* and according to Strong's means to “join.” When Solomon filled in the Millo, he enlarged the City of David by joining it with the Ophel.

According to 1Maccabees 13:52, the Ophel is the location of the temple. The KJV with Apocrypha reads, “. . . Moreover the hill of the temple that was by the tower he made stronger than it was, and there he dwelt himself with his company.” As a secondary reference, the *Catholic Study Bible* states, “. . . He also strengthened the fortifications of the temple mount alongside the citadel, and he and his people dwelt there.”

Even though Maccabees is not considered inspired or part of the canon of Scripture, it still offers invaluable historical insight during the time of the Maccabees and Hasmoneans.

This citation says the biblical temple mount or “temple hill” was located alongside the tower or citadel. This is conclusive evidence that the temple

was alongside the City of David. This also places the biblical Temple Mount approximately a third of a mile south of the traditional Temple Mount.

Temple Built Over a Threshing Floor

Another biblical clue to the location of the temple is the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite, found in 2Chronicles 3:1, “Then Solomon began to build the house of Yahweh at Jerusalem in mount Moriah, where Yahweh appeared unto David his father, in the place that David had prepared in the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite.”

The mention here of Mount Moriah is important. As Zion was synonymous with the City of David, Zion was also synonymous with the location of the temple, i.e., Mount Moriah. Therefore, the Bible connects the City of David, Zion, and Mount Moriah.

The threshing floor where Solomon built the temple belonged to a Jebusite. This fact suggests that it was likely within the borders of the Jebusite city. So, this would place the threshing floor within the City of David and not on today’s Temple Mount. Remember that what is called the Temple Mount today is a third of a mile from the ancient Jebusite city.

A threshing floor was an area where farmers would separate the grain from the straw and husks. The *International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia* states, “The threshing-floors are constructed in the fields, preferably in an exposed position in order to get the full benefit of the winds. If there is a danger of marauders they are clustered together close to the village. The floor is a level, circular area 25 to 40 ft. in diameter, prepared by first picking out the stones, and then wetting the ground, tamping or rolling it, and finally sweeping it. A border of stones usually surrounds the floor to keep in the grain. The sheaves of grain which have been brought on the backs of men, donkeys, camels, or



Example of a threshing floor at Jorge Island, Azores



Jagged and uneven rock floor inside the Dome of the Rock – how can this be a threshing floor? Jerusalem

oxen, are heaped on this area, and the process of tramping out begins. In some localities several animals, commonly oxen or donkeys, are tied abreast and driven round and round the floor. In other places two oxen are yoked together to a drag, the bottom of which is studded with pieces of basaltic stone. This drag, on which the driver, and perhaps his family, sits or stands, is driven in a circular path over the grain.”

The surface of a threshing floor had to be flat, smooth, and hard to allow oxen to tread the grain. It must also be in a location where there would be sufficient wind to separate the grain. This is key as it pertains to the temple.

Most believe that Ornan’s threshing floor was under the Dome of Rock on the traditional Temple Mount. The problem is, as seen in the photo above, the rocky floor of the Dome of the Rock is not flat or even. This fact alone makes it highly unlikely this area served as a threshing floor.

Since the Temple Mount location is the highest of the three hills when compared to the City of David and Ophel, many claim that with the wind conditions the threshing floor would be better suited on the Temple Mount. While it’s true that the elevation of the traditional Temple Mount is higher than the City of David and Ophel, such elevation is not mandatory as the wind blows everywhere.

Another issue with the threshing floor being located on the traditional Temple Mount is that threshing floors were prone to thievery. “Threshing-floors are in danger of being robbed (1Sam 23:1). For this reason, someone

always sleeps on the floor until the grain is removed (Ruth 3:7). In Syria, at the threshing season, it is customary for the family to move out to the vicinity of the threshing-floor. A booth is constructed for shade; the mother prepares the meals and takes her turn with the father and children at riding on the sledge,” Ibid, Threshing-Floor.

Does it make sense that Ornan and his family would place their threshing floor a third of a mile from the “fort”? Keep in mind that during this time the traditional Temple Mount contained no walls or defense. It was completely open to attack. It is far more likely that Ornan’s threshing floor was within the confines of the old Jebusite city and not on an unguarded hill a third of a mile away.

The Gihon Spring and Necessity of Water

One of the most compelling reasons for the temple being located within the City of David is the location of the Gihon Spring. This spring sits along the Kidron Valley near the ancient City of David. The Gihon is one of the world’s largest intermittent springs and made life possible for ancient Jerusalem. While the water from the spring was used for irrigation in the Kidron, it was also central to temple worship.

The *New Unger’s Bible Dictionary* speaks to the ancient and modern history of this famous spring, “The intermittent spring that constituted Jerusalem’s most ancient water supply, situated in the Kidron Valley just below the eastern hill (Ophel). This abundant source of water was entirely covered over and concealed from outside the walls and was conducted by a specially built conduit to a pool within the walls where a besieged city could get all the water it needed. ‘Why should the kings of Assyria come and find abundant water?’ the people queried



Entrance to the Gihon Spring, Jerusalem

in the time of Hezekiah (2 Chron 32:2-4). Hezekiah’s Tunnel, 1,777 feet long, hewn out of the solid rock and comparable to the tunnels at Megiddo and Gezer, conducted the water to a reservoir within the city. From the top of Ophel the ancient Jebusites (c. 2000 B.C.) had cut a passage through the rock where waterpots could be let down a 40-foot shaft to receive the water in the pool 50 feet back from the Gihon. Early excavations at Jerusalem by the Palestine

Exploration Fund under the direction of Sir Charles Warren (1867) resulted in finding the 40-foot rock-cut shaft. It is now known as Warren's Shaft. Conrad Shick in 1891 discovered an ancient surface canal that conveyed water from the Gihon Spring to the old pool of Siloam, located just within the SE extremity of the ancient city. Isaiah seems to have alluded to the softly flowing waters of this gentle brook when he spoke poetically of 'the gently flowing waters of Shiloah' (Isa 8:6)," "Gihon."

Without the Gihon there would have been no Jebusite city for David to conquer. Jerusalem today would likely not exist without this spring. The Gihon Spring is just east of the Ophel, which joins the ancient city of David. Knowing that the Gihon is the only major water source in Jerusalem, does it make sense that Israel would have built their temple on the traditional Temple Mount a third of a mile away from their only water source?

This is especially perplexing considering the thousands of animals that Israel sacrificed on the Sabbath and annual Feast days for which thousands of gallons of water would have been needed then and daily.

History says that Rome built aqueducts from Bethlehem to the Temple Mount. While this theoretically could have provided a water source for Herod's temple, it could not have for Solomon's. So while there is evidence for ancient reservoirs beneath the traditional Temple Mount dating to the time of Rome, there is no evidence of a water source prior to Rome's rule. This presents a real problem for the traditional Temple Mount site.

Ancient Witnesses to Temple Location

History speaks of 70 Jewish families who relocated from Tiberius to Jerusalem in the 7th century CE. Tiberius is located in northern Israel along the Sea of Galilee. Reuvin Hammer, in his book *Jerusalem Anthology*, describes this relocation: "Omar decreed that seventy households should come. They agreed to that. After that he asked: 'Where do you wish to live within the city?' They replied, 'In the southern section of the city, which is the market of the Jews.' Their request was to enable them to be near the site of the Temple and its gates, as well as to the water of Shiloah, which could be used for immersion. This was granted them by Omar, the Emir of the Believers."

Omar was the companion of Mohammed and the second caliph or Islamic leader in Islam.

Several important points need to be made here. These Jewish families insisted on the southern section of the city, near the Pool of Siloam. There is only one section of Jerusalem that is in the southern portion and contains the Pool of Siloam and that is the ancient City of David.



Pool of Siloam (partially exposed) discovered by archaeologist Eli Shukron

According to these Jewish families, this was also the area where the temple once stood. This is hard evidence for the temple location within the City of David and not on the traditional Temple Mount. This author also states that the water from the Pool of Siloam could be used for immersions, which would have included ceremonial washings. That water source was the Gihon Spring.

The fact that water from the Gihon could be used for ceremonial purposes verifies that not all water was equal. It also adds credence to the importance of the Gihon for temple worship. Again this begs the question why the Jews would have built their temple so far from their only water source. Such an idea seems completely preposterous.

A Gushing Spring

The smoking gun for the temple as it relates to the Gihon Spring is eyewitness testimony of a spring-like reservoir within the temple precincts. Two men provide evidence for this.

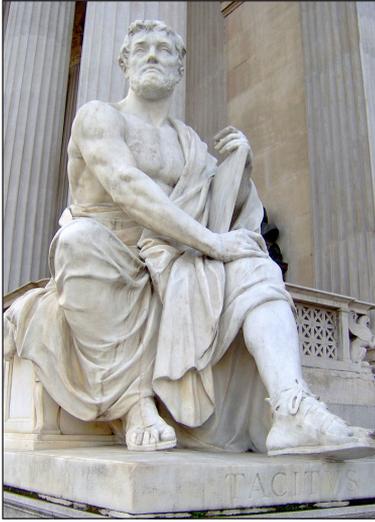
The first eyewitness to confirm this fact is a man named Aristeas, a Jew who lived during the 2nd or 3rd century BCE. Eusebius, the 4th century church historian, records his account.

“There is an inexhaustible reservoir of water, as would be expected from an abundant spring gushing up naturally from within; there being moreover wonderful and indescribable cisterns underground, of five furlongs, according to their showing, all around the foundation of the Temple, and countless pipes from them, so that the streams on every side met together. And all these have been fastened with lead at the bottom of the side-walls, and over these has been spread a great quantity of plaster, all having been carefully wrought,”

Eusebius' recording of Aristeas, chapter 38.

Aristeas was an eyewitness to the temple location from the 2nd or 3rd century BCE. This was not Herod's temple, but the temple of Ezra and Nehemiah. Aristeas said that there was an "inexhaustible reservoir of water, as would be expected from an abundant spring gushing up naturally from within."

The only spring within Jerusalem is the Gihon. If what this eyewitness said is true, the only possible location for the Temple would be within the City of David and above the Gihon Spring.



Tacitus

Remarkably, Aristeas is not the only eyewitness of a spring-like reservoir within the temple area. Tacitus, a Roman historian dating to the 2nd century CE, describes a similar account. He states, "The temple resembled a citadel, and had its own walls, which were more laboriously constructed than the others. Even the colonnades with which it was surrounded formed an admirable outwork. It contained an inexhaustible spring; there were subterranean excavations in the hill, and tanks and cisterns for holding rainwater. The founders of the state had foreseen that frequent wars would result from the singularity of its customs, and so

had made very provision against the most protracted siege," *The History of Tacitus*, p. 199.

Before describing what Tacitus saw, it should be noted that this man lived nearly 400 years after Aristeas and was not a Jew, but a Roman. He would have also been referring to Herod's temple and not to the temple during the time of Ezra and Nehemiah. However, even with these differences, both men refer to an inexhaustible spring within the temple. Again, the only spring they refer to is the Gihon, as the only spring and major water source within the ancient city of Jerusalem.

Tacitus also describes subterranean excavations or tunnels in the hill along with cisterns for holding rainwater. There are many subterranean tunnels and cisterns within the City of David. The sheer size and number of tunnels is astonishing. This provides additional credibility to the ancient City of David and not the traditional Temple Mount.

Along with these eyewitness accounts, Joel 3:18 provides a prophetic description of the future temple and shows similar evidence of a spring. "And it shall come to pass in that day, that the mountains shall drop down new wine,

and the hills shall flow with milk, and all the rivers of Judah shall flow with waters, and a fountain shall come forth of the house of Yahweh, and shall water the valley of Shittim.”

This is a future prophecy of the temple within the millennial Kingdom. Joel confirms here that a fountain will spring forth from underneath the temple, i.e., house of Yahweh. Not only do we have ancient eyewitness testimonies that the temple contained a spring-like reservoir gushing up from underneath the temple precincts, but a similar account is also provided by the prophet Joel as to the future temple.

These facts present a real problem for those who claim that the temple was on the traditional Temple Mount. The only way to reconcile the accounts from Aristeas, Tacitus, and the Book of Joel is to relocate the temple from the traditional Temple Mount to the Ophel, near the Gihon Spring.



Not One Stone Left on Another

Possibly the greatest evidence for the temple's real location are in the prophecies spoken by Yahshua the Messiah. "And as he went out of the temple, one of his disciples saith unto him, Master, see what manner of stones and what buildings are here! And Yahshua answering said unto him, Seest thou these great buildings? there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down," Mark 13:1-2.

Mark 13, along with Matthew 24 and Luke 21, is known as the Olivet Prophecy. This passage begins with a disciple admiring the stones of the temple. In response, Yahshua said that these great buildings would be torn down with not one stone remaining.

Yahshua used the word "buildings." Many who believe that the temple was located on the traditional Temple Mount will contend that Yahshua was referring only to the inner sanctuary and not to the entire temple complex. They do this to explain why the western wall, also known as the Wailing Wall, still stands.

This wall is the holiest site in Judaism. Tradition says that this wall was part of the outer western wall of Herod's Temple. As a side note there's debate as to whether this wall was even built by Herod. Eli Shukron, an archaeologist with the Israeli Antiquities Authority, found a coin at the base of the Wailing Wall dating back to around 18 CE, 20 years after King Herod. Based on this, this wall was likely not built by King Herod, but by Agrippa II, Herod's great-grandson.

When Yahshua gave this prophecy, Mark 13 records that He and the disciples were on the Mount of Olives looking back to the temple. From this location He would have viewed not only the inner sanctuary of the temple, but the entire temple precincts. With this in mind, along with the fact that He uses the word "buildings," it seems unlikely that He was referring only to the inner sanctuary. It is far more probable that He was referring to the entire temple platform, which would have included the outer western wall. And remember, He stated that not one stone would remain upon another. Based on this prophecy and the known facts, how is it possible that the Wailing Wall remains today? There is no satisfactory explanation. Either Yahshua exaggerated or the Temple Mount is not the location of the ancient temple and this wall belongs to something else entirely.

Antiquity Supports Destruction

In addition to Yahshua's prophecy, there is extensive evidence from antiquity to the destruction of the temple. Both Jewish and Christian sources confirm

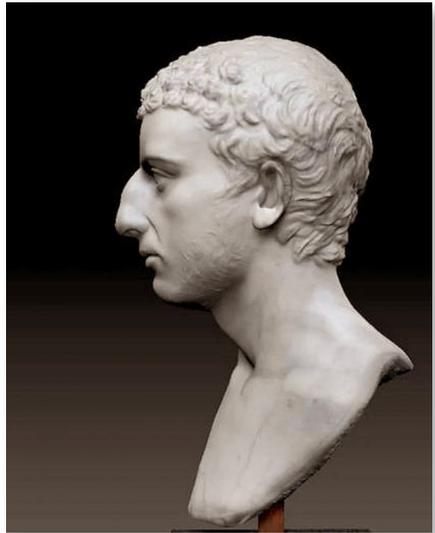
similar ruin. In fact, not only do they validate what Yahshua stated, but do so in a manner that verifies the destruction included not only the inner sanctuary, but also the entire platform, with the outer walls.

One of the most well-known accounts is by Flavius Josephus. Josephus lived between 37 and 100 CE and is one of the most renowned scholars and historians of the first century. He lived before and after the temple was destroyed. Therefore, this man provides invaluable firsthand testimony of this destruction.

Josephus in *War of the Jews* recounts, “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” (Book VII, ch. 8).

The reference to “profane” here verifies that the Romans had no reverence for the temple. Even more importantly, Josephus states the foundation stones themselves were dug up and removed. Based on this extreme destruction, it’s hard to believe that Rome would have allowed the foundation stones of the current Temple Mount and the Wailing Wall to remain standing.

Evidence for the destruction of the entire temple platform is also found from Epiphanius of Salamis, a fourth century bishop in Cyprus. In his work, *On Weights and Measures*, he testifies to this destruction. “It was the second



Flavius Josephus 37–100 CE

year of his reign when he [Hadrian] went up to Jerusalem, the famous and much-praised city which had been destroyed by Titus the son of Vespasian. He found it utterly destroyed and God’s Holy Temple a ruin, there being nothing where the city had stood but a few dwellings and one small church,” pp. 17-18.

Epiphanius records the eyewitness account of Emperor Hadrian. He states that Hadrian visited Jerusalem two years into his reign, approximately 119 CE. When he arrived, he was amazed at the devastation the city suffered under the Roman General Titus.

He confirms that the temple was in ruins and that Jerusalem was utterly destroyed. Considering this, is it reasonable to believe that Titus would have allowed the foundations of the Temple Mount along with a large portion of the

western wall to remain? This is highly unlikely.

Another who provides insight into the temple's destruction is Eusebius of Caesarea. Eusebius lived during the fourth century and was a historian, scholar, and bishop of Caesarea Maritima. He is one of the most well-known historians of the early church.

In his work, *Proof of the Gospel*, he states the following: "Mount Zion was burned and left utterly desolate, and the Mount of the House of God became as a grove of the wood. If our own observation has any value, we have seen in our own time Zion once so famous ploughed with yokes of oxen by the Romans and utterly devastated, and Jerusalem as the oracle says, deserted like a lodge" (Bk. VI, ch.13, sect. 273).

Eusebius laments how such a place could have been so devastated that it was reduced to a plot of farmland where the oxen ploughed.



1910 aerial view of Jerusalem. The City of David is literally farm land.

Considering this description from Eusebius, is it realistic to believe that the foundation stones along with the western wall of the current Temple Mount were intact after the invasion of the Roman army? As we saw from Josephus and Epiphanius, such a conclusion is nearly impossible to draw.

Later in this same work, Eusebius states, "The hill called Zion and Jerusalem, the buildings there, the Temple, the Holy of Holies, the Altar, and whatever else there was dedicated to the glory of God, [has] been utterly removed or shaken, in fulfillment of the Word" (Book VIII, ch.3, sect. 405).

Eusebius states that the total destruction included the temple, the Holy of Holies, and all that was considered holy--hence the entire temple complex, including the outer walls.

Eusebius astoundingly states, "Their ancient holy place, at any rate, and their Temple are to this day as much destroyed as Sodom" (Ibid, Book V, ch.23, sect. 250).

Eusebius compares the destruction of the temple to the devastation of Sodom in the Old Testament. During our 2016 pilgrimage to Israel we visited what many believe is the ancient city of Gomorrah. As we know, Gomorrah

suffered the same fate as Sodom.

As can be seen in the image of Gomorrah, nothing remains of this ancient city, now reduced to rubble. Except for ash and a few remaining sulfur balls, Gomorrah today is a wasteland.

Assuming that Eusebius was not exaggerating, is it possible that the Roman army left the foundation of the temple and Wailing Wall unscathed? Doubtful.

Jerusalem Itself Razed

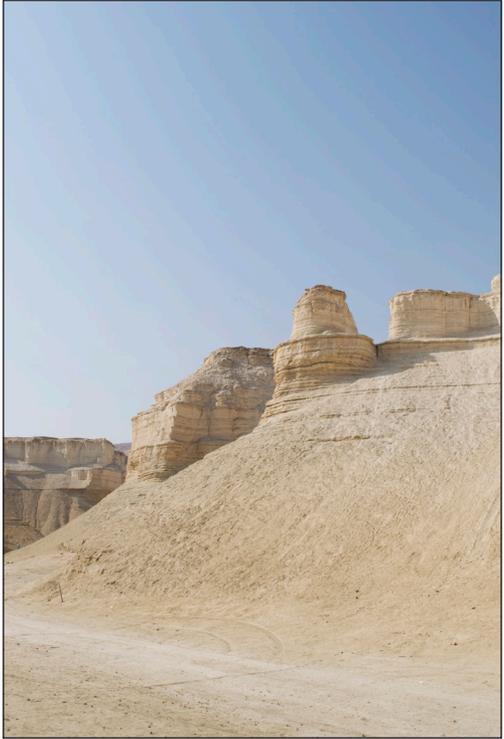
In addition to the temple, Yahshua also prophesied a similar fate for the city of Jerusalem. “As he approached Jerusalem and saw the city, he wept over it and said, ‘If you, even you, had only known on this day what would bring you peace—but now it is

hidden from your eyes. The days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment against you and encircle you and hem you in on every side. They will dash you to the ground, you and the children within your walls. They will not leave one stone on another,’” Luke 19:41-44, NIV.

Yahshua’s prophecy of Jerusalem’s destruction was fulfilled. It’s amazing how history validates the Bible. Archaeology and scholarship have overwhelmingly confirmed the accuracy of the Bible.

Similar to what Yahshua said about the temple, He says here regarding Jerusalem. He verifies that not one stone would be left upon another. And as we know through antiquity, Jerusalem’s destruction was so great that the city was hardly identifiable.

According to Josephus in *Wars of the Jews*, “And truly, the very view itself was a melancholy thing; for those places which were adorned with trees and pleasant gardens, were now become desolate country every way, and its trees were all cut down. Nor could any foreigner that had formerly seen Judaea and the most beautiful suburbs of the city, and now saw it as a desert, but lament and mourn sadly at so great a change. For the war had laid all signs of beauty



Possible sight of Gomorrah, near Masada

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” (Book VI. ch.1).

Rome’s destruction of the city made Jerusalem unrecognizable. This once grand city had been reduced to rubble. Josephus describes the city as “desolate.” He goes on to say that even those who were familiar with the city would not have known it after Rome’s destruction.

Knowing that the temple was the central focus of Jerusalem, how is it possible to reconcile this description with the remaining foundation of the traditional Temple Mount and the western wall? Considering that these objects would have been well known and easily identifiable, how is it possible that even those who were familiar with the city before would not have recognized it afterward?

Josephus also describes this destruction in Book VII, chapter 7, “As he came to Jerusalem in his progress, and compared the melancholy condition he saw it then in, with the ancient glory of the city with the greatness of its present ruins (as well as its ancient splendor). He could not but pity the destruction of the city ... Yet there was no small quantity of the riches that had been in that city still found among the ruins, a great deal of which the Romans dug up; but the greatest part was discovered by those who were captives, and so they [the Romans] carried it away; I mean the gold and the silver, and the rest of that most precious furniture which the Jews had, and which the owners had treasured up under ground against the uncertainties of war,” Ibid.

Not only was the entire city of Jerusalem destroyed, but much of it was dug up. After Jerusalem fell to the Romans, the army began looking for valuables, including gold and silver. To hide many of these valuables, many Jews buried them. So not only was the city completely demolished, but they also excavated the very foundation stones, including





South end of the Western Wall.

within the temple precincts, looking for plunder.

This confirms Yahshua's prophecy that not one stone would remain, including the foundation stones. Based on this, it's hard to fathom how anything substantial would have remained within the city or temple platform, especially considering the ornateness of the temple. It's likely that the temple was ground zero for many of these Romans who desecrated the holy place for personal gain.

In addition to the Jewish historian Josephus, we also find evidence for Jerusalem's destruction from the early church. Gregory of Nyssa, a fourth century bishop and Nicene Father, also gives an account of Jerusalem's desolation, "Up to the time of the manifestation of Christ the royal palaces in Jerusalem were in all their splendor: there was their far-famed Temple, . . . [but now] no traces even of their Temple can be recognized, and their splendid city has been left in ruins, so that there remains to the Jews nothing of the ancient institutions; while by the command of those who rule over them the very ground of Jerusalem which they so venerated is forbidden to them," *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 5, p. 940.

Gregory of Nyssa states that no traces of the temple were left. We know that the Temple Mount foundation along with the Wailing Wall existed during the fourth century. How is it possible that such prominent landmarks were missed? How is it possible that no traces of the temple remained if large portions of the foundation and walls of the temple remained? The logical answer is, what is called the Temple Mount today is not the location of the temple.

The Remaining Monument a Roman Wall

We find a clue as to what the Temple Mount was from Josephus in *Wars of the Jews*. He states, "And where is now that great city, the metropolis of the Jewish nation, which was fortified by so many walls round about, which had so many fortresses and large towers to defend it, which could hardly contain

the instruments prepared for the war, and which had so many ten thousands of men to fight for it? Where is this city that was believed to have God himself inhabiting therein? It is now demolished to the very foundations, and hath nothing left but that monument of it preserved, I mean the camp of those that hath destroyed it” (Book 7, ch. 8).

Josephus, quoting Eleazar Ben Ya’ir, commander and leader of the Sicarii, painted a dreadful picture of the ancient city of Jerusalem. He described how the once crown jewel of the Jewish nation had been demolished down to its very foundation and how only one monument remained, i.e., the camp.

What camp was Josephus referring to? From a historical standpoint, the only possible answer is Fortress Antonia. This was the Roman camp or fort that existed during the time of the Messiah and after the destruction of Jerusalem. So according to Josephus, the only substantial structure that remained after Rome’s demolition of Jerusalem was this Roman fort. Everything else within the city was demolished.

Where was Fortress Antonia located? The only plausible answer is the traditional Temple Mount, where the Al-Aqsa Mosque and Dome of the Rock are located. Again, Josephus confirms that the only remaining structure was the Roman fort and there is only one major structure that still exists today within the city of Jerusalem from that time period – the traditional Temple Mount platform. This means that the current Temple Mount along with the Wailing Wall was not part of the temple, but of Fortress Antonia.

Before we go any further with Fortress Antonia, let’s first review the Roman Tenth Legion.

Rome’s Tenth Legion Stationed There

From newhistorian.com we learn about the location and history of this military power: “Bricks from the bathhouse were stamped with the name of the Tenth Roman Legion, which was part of the takeover of Jewish Yerushalayim. Its soldiers were garrisoned there until 300 CE. The Tenth Roman Legion (Legio X Fretensis) was created by Augustus Caesar between 41 and 40 BCE, specifically to fight in the civil war which marked the beginning of the end of the Republic of Rome. The tenth legion existed until at least the 410’s,” *Reminders of the Tenth Roman Legion Unearthed in Jerusalem.*

A key fact is that the Roman Tenth Legion was an actual legion, coming from the Latin *legio*. We’ll see later why this is important. We also find here that the Tenth Legion was stationed in Jerusalem until about 300 CE and existed until the 410s. Long after Jerusalem had been destroyed by the Romans, the Tenth Legion remained there for nearly 200 years.

A Legion Is Like a City

French author, Yann Le Bohec, describes the number and complexity of a typical Roman camp: “With almost 5000 men, a legionary camp was the equivalent of a town. Consequently everything that was essential for the daily life of such a community — hospital, stores, workshops, baths, as well as public lavatories — was to be found,” *The Imperial Roman Army*, p. 160.

Besides the 5,000 men was the support staff. According to some, a support staff would have added several thousand more. A legionary camp was equivalent to an average town, including stores, workshops, baths, and many other necessities.

The *Cyclopedia of Biblical Theological and Ecclesiastical Literature* states, “The legion appears to have originally contained about 3000 men, and to have risen gradually to twice that number, or even more. In and about the time of Christ it seems to have consisted of 6000 men, and this was exclusive of horsemen, who usually formed an additional body amounting to one tenth of the infantry,” Vol. V, “Legion,” p. 329.

In all, a typical Roman legion could have had as many as 10,000 people.



Imperial Roman legionaries in formation



Recreation of the legionary fortress of Deva. Notice how small the amphitheater looks in comparison

Now why is this number important? It verifies that the current model of Fortress Antonia as shown by scholarship could not be right. As seen in the model of Fortress Antonia as displayed at the Israel Museum in Jerusalem, it would be impossible to accommodate more than a few hundred troops (see image page 25).

So how does scholarship explain this discrepancy? Many claim that the Roman Tenth Legion was not a legion, but a cohort, containing about 600

men. There are two issues with this: (1) By definition, the Tenth Legion was not a cohort, but a legion, coming from the Latin *Legio X Fretensis*, meaning, “Tenth legion of the Strait” and 2) a typical legionary camp or fortress was the size of a city. Therefore, based on this evidence, the traditional model at the Israel Museum is likely incorrect.

Fortress Antonia

Besides the inaccuracies we have already seen, Josephus, an eyewitness to this Roman fortress, provides several important facts that modern scholarship seems to overlook.

First, Josephus states in *Antiquities of the Jews*, “Now on the north side [of the temple] was built a citadel, whose walls were square, and strong, and of extraordinary firmness. This citadel was built by the Kings of the Asamonean race, who were also High Priests, before Herod; and they called it the tower... But for the tower itself, when Herod the King of the Jews had fortified it more firmly than before, in order to secure and guard the temple, he gratified Antonius; who was his friend, and the Roman ruler; and then gave it the name of the tower of Antonia” (Book XV, ch.11).



Josephus further provides somewhat of a lengthy but crucial description of Fortress Antonia in *War of the Jews*: “Now as to the tower of Antonia, it was situated at the corner of two cloisters 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, both for ornament, and that any one who would either try to get up or to go down it might not be able to hold his feet upon it. Next to this, and before you come to the edifice of the tower itself, there was a wall three cubits high; but within that wall all the space of the tower of Antonia itself was built upon, to the height of forty cubits. The inward parts had the largeness and form of a palace it being parted into all kinds of rooms and other conveniences, such as courts, and places for bathing, and broad spaces for camps; insomuch that, by having all conveniences that cities wanted, it might



Thirty-six acre Harem El Sharif, originally Fortress Antonia

seem to be composed of several cities. By its magnificence it seemed a palace. And as the entire structure resembled that of a tower, it contained also four other distinct towers at its four corners; whereof the others were but fifty cubits high; whereas that which lay upon the southeast corner was seventy cubits high, that from thence the whole Temple might be viewed, but on the corner where it joined to the two cloisters of the Temple, it had passages down to them both, through which the guard (for there always lay in this tower a Roman legion) went several ways among the cloisters, with their arms, on the Jewish

festivals, in order to watch the people, that they might not there attempt to make any innovations; for the Temple was a fortress that guarded the city, as was the tower of Antonia a guard to the Temple, and in that tower were the guards of those three. There was also a peculiar fortress belonging to the upper

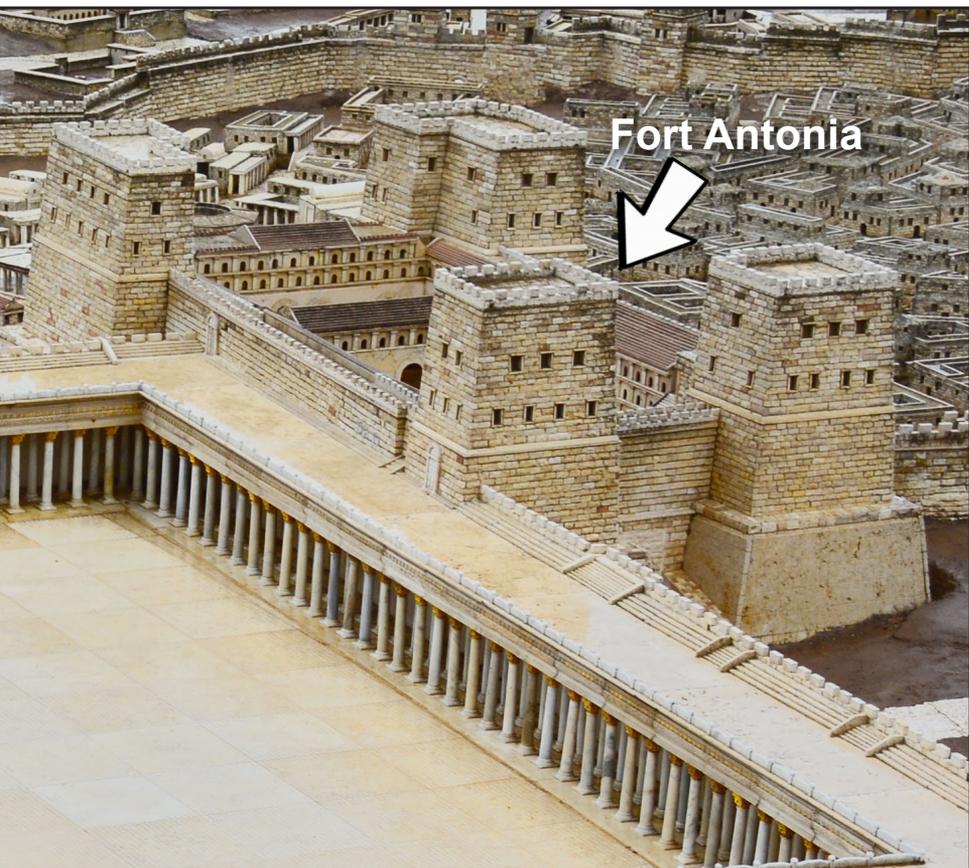
city, which was Herod's palace, but for the hill Bezetha, it was divided from the tower Antonia, as we have already told you, and as that hill on which the tower of Antonia stood was the highest of these three, so did it adjoin to the new city, and was the only place that hindered the sight of the Temple on the north." (Book 5, ch.8).

We learn a great deal from these two accounts from Josephus. Below is a summary highlighting the major or crucial points:

- Fortress Antonia was originally a fortress built by the Hasmoneans, i.e., Maccabees.
- Herod further fortified the fortress to protect the temple and gave it the name "Fortress Antonia" in honor of Mark Anthony.
- The temple and Fortress Antonia were connected by two cloisters, i.e., covered bridges, (Wars VI, 2, 144 confirms this distance at 600 feet).



- A typical Roman fortress contained all kinds of conveniences (e.g. courts, places for bathing, and broad spaces for camps), similar to an actual city.
 - Fortress Antonia had four distinct towers at its four corners measuring 50 cubits (75 feet), except for the southeast corner, which measured 70 cubits (105 feet) high, from which the temple could be viewed.
 - Fortress Antonia housed the Tenth Roman Legion, of approximately 6,000 men.
 - As the temple was to guard Jerusalem, Fortress Antonia was to guard the temple.
 - Fortress Antonia was located on the highest of the three hills.
 - Looking from the north, Fortress Antonia blocked the view of the temple.
- Several points here are inconsistent with the model at the Israel Museum in Jerusalem.



Avi-Yona's small Antonia Fortress model next to the Temple precinct. Full model at the Israel Museum, Jerusalem.

Missing Connectors and Hills

Josephus mentions two covered bridges that connected the temple and Fortress Antonia. No such bridges exist in the Avi-Yona model at the Israel Museum. Also, the description of the fort resembling a city and housing a 6,000-man army does not fit the current model, as it is far too small. We also find inconsistencies with the towers. The towers depicted on the model have four equal-length towers, while Josephus clearly states that the tower overlooking the temple was 25 additional cubits. He also stated that the fort obscured or blocked the view of the temple from the north. This is certainly not depicted by the model. Another major problem between the model and Josephus' account is the fact that the fortress was on the third highest hill.

Neither of these last two points is depicted by the model at the Israel Museum. However, if the temple was within the City of David on the Ophel, and Fortress Antonia was on the Temple Mount or the Haram esh-Sharif, everything falls into place. When you survey the City of David, the Ophel, and the Temple Mount area, the Temple Mount area is on the third highest hill and also obscures the Ophel and the City of David from the north.

Roman Fortresses Built Alike

Another indication for the traditional Temple Mount being the location of Fortress Antonia is the fact that it shares similar dimensions with other legionary camps. The Temple Mount platform is 36 acres in size with the eastern wall measuring 1,541 feet, the southern wall measuring 918 feet, the western wall measuring 1,601 feet, and the northern wall measuring 1,033 feet. While the Temple Mount resembles a rectangle, it is in fact a trapezoid.

This shape is similar to other Roman forts. For example, there is a Roman fortress in Caerleon, Wales, dating to 75 CE. It measures a total of 50 acres. It is believed that this particular fort housed the Second Roman Legion, of approximately 5,500 men.



Another is in Neuss, Germany, dating to 80 CE. The size is 59 acres and possibly housed the Nineteenth Roman Legion. There are remains of a Roman fort from Haltern, Germany, with a total size of 85 acres. It's thought this fort housed two Roman legions.

The size and shape of these Roman fortresses strongly resemble the area known as the Temple Mount. Could this only be coincidence? It is highly doubtful. It is far more likely that these similarities offer additional evidence for the Temple Mount platform being the location of Fortress Antonia. One fact is certain: the model at the Israel Museum does not fit the description from



Roman siege camp F can still be seen today from Masada, Israel

Josephus or what archaeology confirms regarding a Roman fort or legionary camp.

The Paul Dilemma

A final piece of evidence for the Temple Mount being the location of Fortress Antonia comes from the 23rd chapter of Acts. “The dispute became so violent that the commander was afraid Paul would be torn to pieces by them. He ordered the troops to go down and take him away from them by force and bring him into the barracks... Then he called two of his centurions and ordered them, ‘Get ready a detachment of two hundred soldiers, seventy horsemen and two hundred spearmen to go to Caesarea at nine tonight,’” vv. 10, 23, NIV.

Due to a dispute caused partially by Paul, the Romans were forced to fetch Paul from the temple to the barracks, i.e., Fortress Antonia. Notice that the men who retrieved Paul came DOWN from the barracks to the temple. This shows that the Roman fortress was at a higher elevation than the temple and verifies Josephus’ account that Fortress Antonia was on the third highest of the three hills.

We also see here that Rome provided two hundred soldiers, seventy

horsemen, and two hundred spearmen to escort Paul from Jerusalem to Caesarea, a total of 470 men. Again, some theorize that the Tenth Legion was not a legion, but a cohort. In other words, they claim that instead of 6,000 men, Fortress Antonia housed only 600 men.

Knowing that Rome provided Paul with 470 men, is it reasonable to assume that the Roman Tenth Legion consisted of only a cohort? If true, this means that they gave 78 percent of their military force to escort one man and leaving



only 22 percent to guard the entire city of Jerusalem. This is highly improbable! However, assuming that the Tenth Roman Legion was an actual legion of 6,000 men, 470 men is possible, especially because Paul was a Roman citizen.

Prophetic Impact

While this theory of the temple's actual locational is not salvational, it is a belief that may hold a crucial key to future prophecy. The Bible is clear that a third temple will be rebuilt before Yahshua's coming.

Yahshua in Matthew 24:15 states, "When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:)." The phrase "holy place" is an allusion to the Holy of Holies within the temple.

Paul also describes a temple in 2Thessalonians 2:3-4: "Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed the son of perdition; Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called Elohim, or that is worshipped; so

that he as Elohim sitteth in the temple of Elohim, shewing himself that he is Elohim.” Paul clearly states here that the son of perdition or anti-messiah will sit in a temple exalting himself as elohim or as a god to be worshiped.

As a final reference, John of Patmos in Revelation 11:1-2 records, “And there was given me a reed like unto a rod: and the angel stood, saying, Rise, and measure the temple of Elohim, and the altar, and them that worship therein. 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 foot forty and two months.” John not only confirms here a temple, but also describes the outer court.

Based on this and the two previous accounts, there is little doubt that a third temple will be rebuilt prior to the return of Yahshua the Messiah. Assuming that the temple was originally located within the City of David, as indicated by the evidence, and Jewish scholarship accepted this conclusion, this could radically impact future prophecy.

It is for this reason that this theory is important. While many are looking to the traditional Temple Mount as the location for the third temple, the actual location may be elsewhere. If this is the case, as seems to be supported by Scripture and antiquity, and is ever accepted by the Jews, this could provide an alternate location for the temple and shock millions in the process.

RESTORATION TIMES

Restoration Times is a beautiful, bi-monthly magazine. This attractive, eye-opening publication provides solid understanding of sound, biblical teachings along with current events as seen in Bible prophecy.

For those who faithfully support this Ministry with a financial gift of \$25 or more, a one-year subscription to this informative publication will be sent by postal mail. Read online: restorationtimes.org

Here's how to donate:

Yahweh's Restoration Ministry
PO Box 463
Holts Summit, MO 65043

Toll Free: (844) 899-6438
Office Hours: Monday-Friday 8am-4pm
Online: donate.yrm.org





Yahweh's Restoration Ministry

PO Box 463

Holts Summit, MO 65043

Phone: 573-896-1000

Office hours Monday-Friday 8am-4pm

Online Addresses:

Home page: www.yrm.org

Television Program: www.discoverthetruth.tv

E-mail: mail@yrm.org

Tax-deductible donations can be mailed to the address above or we accept credit card donations by phone during our normal office hours. We also accept online donations at: www.donate.yrm.org



LIVE streaming services every Saturday at 1:30pm yrm.org/live

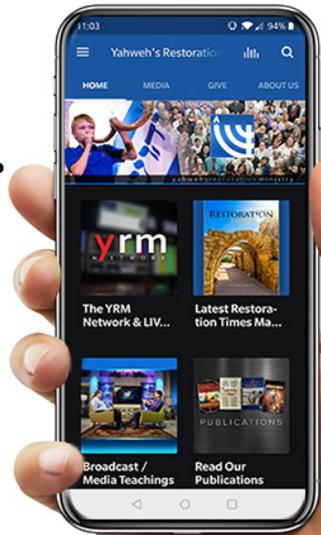
Truth with a **Touch**...

So many features we would need
another App to explain them all...

Just download it!



Search Yahweh's Restoration Ministry



Free and no sign ups!