
Chapter 18

THE TEMPLE ON THE SOUTHEAST RIDGE

THERE IS EVEN MORE to show that both the City of David and the site of Solomon's Temple were located *within the crescent area* of the southeast ridge near the *center* of early Jerusalem. This fact is related in the Book of Enoch written near the time of Simon the Hasmonean. This book is not a part of the Holy Scriptures but it is referred to favorably by the Book of Jude in the New Testament.³⁶⁴

We are told that the author of Enoch went to Jerusalem and recorded what he saw. His description is remarkable because he agreed with what Aristeas and Hecateus stated. Just as Ezekiel the prophet in a vision looked southward to see Jerusalem positioned on a hill (Ezekiel 40:2), Enoch also stood in a northern area and looked southward. He saw the whole of the City of Jerusalem. Note what he stated in chapter twenty-six.

³⁶⁴ Jude 14.

“(1) I went thence to the middle of the earth [a symbol for Jerusalem], and I saw a blessed place in which there were trees with branches abiding and blooming of a dismembered tree. (2) And there *I saw a holy mountain*, and *underneath* the mountain to the east [on its eastern side] was a stream and it flowed toward the south.”³⁶⁵

This is an important description. The author of the Book of Enoch observed a holy mountain with a stream running *underneath* the mountain. Professor Charles correctly identified this stream as being that which began at the Gihon Spring located about halfway up the eastern side of the crescent-shaped ridge.

The author of Enoch saw the stream coming from the Gihon Spring and descending southward. It went *underneath* the holy mountain (Zion). In actual fact, Enoch saw two watercourses that led southward from the Gihon Spring. One was constructed to flow *outside* the walls along the eastern slope of the mountain (at times it was an open trench and at other times underground). This was probably the stream that Isaiah wrote about when he said: “This people refuseth the waters of Shiloah, that go softly.”³⁶⁶ The other stream was different. It flowed *underneath* the holy mountain — *inside* the mountain. This watercourse also began at the Gihon Spring but descended in a circuitous tunnel to the Pool of Siloam. This was the well-known tunnel carved out of the solid rock by the engineers of King Hezekiah in the eighth century B.C.E.³⁶⁷

This geographical description by the author of the Book of Enoch provides us with a general topographical appearance of Jerusalem as it existed near the time of Simon the Hasmonean. This, however, was not all. He gave more information about the “holy mountain” and the “outside” stream that flowed along the Kedron Valley.

“(3) And I saw toward the east [of the holy mountain] another mountain higher than the first [as Prof. Charles said, he saw the Mount of Offense eastward from Zion across the Kedron Valley —

³⁶⁵ Charles, R.H., *Pseudepigrapha*, Vol. II, p.205, italics are my emphasis and the words in brackets are mine.

³⁶⁶ Isaiah 8:6.

³⁶⁷ II Chronicles 32:30.

a mountain which was a southern extension of the Mount of Olives and located directly to the east of Mount Zion]; and in the midst of them [between Mount Zion and the Mount of Offense] a valley deep and narrow [the Kedron Valley], and through it a stream [the “outside” stream] ran alongside this higher mountain. (4) And to the west thereof [of the Mount of Offense and Olivet] was another mountain, lower than it [lower than the Mount of Offense and Olivet] and of no great height [this mountain was where the Dome of the Rock now stands], and a valley at its foot between them, deep and dry [this was the deep and dry extension of the Kedron Valley north of the Gihon Spring], and all the valleys [were] deep and dry at the farthest parts of the three mountains [that is, the Tyropoeon Valley was deep and dry west of the city, and the Valley of Hinnom was deep and dry even farther away to the south, and the valley between the Dome of the Rock and the Mount of Olives was deep and dry farther to the north]. (5) And all the valleys were deep and narrow, of flint rock, and no tree was planted in them. (6) And [so majestic was the sight that] I marveled at the rocky ground and I marveled at the valley [the deepness of the Kedron Valley]; indeed, I marveled exceedingly.”³⁶⁸

Note carefully that the third mountain observed by the author of Enoch was located west of the Mount of Offense which was the southern extension of the Mount of Olives. This third mountain was the elevated area where the Dome of the Rock now stands. This mountain was NOT a part of the Holy Mountain that Enoch saw from the Mount of Offense. Note specifically that the Holy Mountain had the Gihon Spring (the only perennial water source in Jerusalem) as a part of its geographical holiness.

There is another significant point that must be realized concerning this description of Jerusalem in the Book of Enoch. The author said that there was a continually running stream that ran *underneath* the “holy mountain” (west of the Mount of Offense). Besides this, he said there was another “outside” stream along the Kedron Valley between that “holy mountain” (Zion) and the Mount of Offense. These two streams were supplied by water from the Gihon Spring. This was a karst type of spring located on the

³⁶⁸ Following the text of the Ethiopic “Book of Enoch” as rendered by Matthew Black, *Studia in Veteris Testamenti Pseudepigrapha*, pp.3940, words in brackets are mine.

East Side of the holy mountain. He also saw his third mountain west of the Mount of Offense and Olivet. Note that *there were no running streams* associated with that third mountain. The areas north of the Gihon were all dry. Indeed, all the other valleys surrounding the crescented-shaped Jerusalem were “deep and dry” — a typical description of *wadis* in the Middle East that are not fed by perennial springs but only contain water when it rains or by runoffs from melting snow. Since there was only *one spring* in the Jerusalem area (the Gihon Spring), this means that the watered parts of Jerusalem observed by the author of the Book of Enoch and associated with the “holy mountain” were confined to the areas from the Gihon Spring and southward.

This fact is a very significant geographical feature that helps to explain many topographical aspects of early Jerusalem. For example, the various biblical references to the *Water Gate* located in the eastern wall of early Jerusalem can only signify the gate that led directly to the Gihon Spring.³⁶⁹ This is because there was *no water* north of the Gihon to which a road through a gate could lead. Indeed, the Bible shows precisely that the *Water Gate* was directly *east* of the *Ophel* summit on the southeast ridge.³⁷⁰ This indicates that the *Ophel* summit (on which the Temple stood) was adjacent to the *Water Gate* and directly above the Gihon Spring.

The Kedron Valley to the north of the Gihon Spring, however, which included the area on the East Side of the Dome of the Rock, was “deep and dry” (it was without a constant water source) as were the other valleys such as the Tyropoeon and the Hinnom. This shows that the *Water Gate* can never be located north of the Gihon Spring. What this reveals is the fact that, just before the time of Simon the Hasmonean (as described in the Book of Enoch), it was the Mount of Offense that was directly *east* of the crescent-shaped city of Jerusalem with its Gihon Spring. At that time, the summit areas of the Mount of Olives (that had no spring waters within that northern area) was not east of the Holy Mountain. The Temple Mount had the Mount of Offense (the southern spur)

³⁶⁹ Mentioned in Nehemiah 3:26; 8:1,3,16; 12:37.

³⁷⁰ See Nehemiah 3:26.

directly east of it, NOT the higher regions of the Mount of Olives in the north.

Look at what this means. When the Scriptures state that the Mount of Olives was *east* of Jerusalem,³⁷¹ the scriptural definition refers to that area on the southern spur of Olivet called the Mount of Offense. This definition in the Bible is not speaking about the two summit areas of Olivet in the north. Note Second Kings 23:13 that refers to the southern flank of Olivet located *east* of Jerusalem: “The high places that were *before* Jerusalem [that is, *east* of Jerusalem], which were *on the RIGHT HAND* [southern part of Olivet] on the hill of Corruption.”

The “Hill of Corruption” is the same as the “Mount of Offense.” This means that in the time of prophets, it was the “Mount of Offense” that was directly *east* of early Jerusalem. This is the witness of the biblical writers and secular observers before the time of Simon the Hasmonean state the same thing. This *eastern* site from Jerusalem of the Mount of Offense is described in First Kings 11:7. It was a “hill” that was the *southern* flank of the Mount of Olives. This hill was the southern spur of Olivet and this mount was not a part of the two summit areas that were directly *east* of the Dome of the Rock located a third of a mile north.

All of these geographical facts are highly significant in discovering the location of the original Temples of Solomon and Zerubabel. The truth is, the whole of the city of Jerusalem as seen by the author of Enoch (including the Temple which was in the city’s *center*) was restricted to the crescent-shaped ridge located to the *west* of the Mount of Offense spur on the southern side of the Mount of Olives. At this early time, the area of the Dome of the Rock was much to the north and outside the walls of Jerusalem. It was not even a part of the city.

These eyewitness accounts are most important to consider in trying to piece together an understanding of the real history of Jerusalem prior to the time of Simon the Hasmonean. The fact is, however, modern archaeologists are totally avoiding these histori-

³⁷¹ As shown in Ezekiel 11:23 and Zechariah 14:4.

cal evidences in their evaluations of what the Jerusalem of antiquity was like. This lack of knowledge is widespread. It is no wonder that archaeologists have been making erroneous interpretations regarding the excavated remains from the region of the City of David and the *Ophel* summit area located just to the north of Zion. By not recognizing these historical facts, many misjudgments are being made by archaeologists and scholars regarding the real topographical alignments associated with the southeast ridge. This book, however, can mend the errors.