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Gihon Temple Evidence: Jeff Rense Interview of Ernest Martin

by Ernest L. Martin, Ph.D., November 5, 2000

Transcribed, edited and annotated by David Sielaff, January 2017

Read first the accompanying [Newsletter for January 2017](#)



Dr. Ernest L. Martin was interviewed by nationally syndicated radio host Jeff Rense on November 5, 2000. The audio of the program has been online on the “[ASK Audio Presentations](#)” webpage for more than a decade (scroll down to find it). I have transcribed the program as a review of Dr. Martin’s Temple important research. **I edited the text for space** and added a few footnotes. You can listen to the audio while you read the text. I told Dr. Martin about the *Jeff Rense Show* sometime in October 2000. He asked me to contact Jeff on his behalf. They spoke by phone and the interview was arranged and the recorded broadcast was done live by phone. As you will read and hear, both men seemed to have a lively and animated exchange of ideas.

After Dr. Martin’s death in January 2002 I wrote Jeff Rense for permission to download the interview to the ASK website. He gave permission for ASK to use the broadcast for any purpose.

The 3-hour interview is in two parts: the first deals with Dr. Martin’s Temple research. The topic for the second part was Dr. Martin’s other book, *The Star That Astonished the World: the Star of Bethlehem*. The entire show was rebroadcast a number of times, and Jeff Rense continued to broadcast the *Star* portion for several years as part of a pre-recorded holiday broadcast. (The transcript of *The Star That Astonished the World* will come later.)

We have them in MP3 format. For each part, fast forward through the intro music.

MP3 format: [Part 1](#), [Part 2](#), [Part 3](#), [Part 4](#), [Part 5](#), [Part 6](#), [Part 7](#), [Part 8](#).

Part 3 begins the relevant discussion about the Temple and the evidence of its true location above the Gihon Spring.

Parts 1 and 2 are an introduction of Dr. Martin to the *Jeff Rense Show* audience. It is lengthy and goes into Dr. Martin’s background and other historical material. I encourage you to listen to the first two sections.

For the Temple information, begin with Part 3 below, in **yellow** (or shaded, if black and white), [click with your mouse](#) on the link “Part 3” to open and play that section of the MP3. *David Sielaff, Editor*

Introduction to the Temple Interview

Rense: [Part 3, MP3 format, begin @ 44 sec.] My guest is Dr. Ernest L. Martin, his book *The Temples That Jerusalem Forgot* ... is 486 pages, soft cover. Every scholar, everyone interested in religion as it pertains to our current events and our life in general, ought to read this remarkably well researched and documented viewpoint that the Temple is not where most people think it is. It is not that far away, but it is not where people think it is today. The book is ... \$24.95 [now \$29.95], and that is plus shipping, Dr. Martin?

Martin: No, with shipping. That is with the postage.

Rense: ... The book by Dr. Martin is the result of his conclusive research that shows that the Temples of God in Jerusalem were indeed located not where people currently think, but over — we'll get to that point in just a minute. Let's build a little drama here. There is quite a dramatic story here. Tell us what the Temples of God were, who built them, just for everyone so we do not leave anybody behind, and what the significance is.

Background: From the Tabernacle to the First Temple

Martin: In actual fact the first Temple or Sanctuary was not a building of its own at all. It was a tent. Most of us know the stories that we have learned from childhood about the Exodus of the Israelites from Egypt under Moses. Within the first year of that Exodus journey Moses ordered that a tent, a tabernacle as it was called, was to be built, with three major compartments to it. [1] A court for the Israelites on the outside, [2] an inner part for the priests, and then [3] a most inner part called the Holy of Holies where the High Priest would go in once a year.

Rense: That was a pretty big tent.

Martin: Well, it was, about 100 ... or so feet I should say, wide and a little longer than that. It could be carted from place to place. We are told in the Bible that there was a cloud that would be hovering over it during the daytime, and a light at night. That was the first "Temple." In actual fact it was a Temple.

Once they went into the land of Canaan, however, and conquered that, they set that tabernacle up at a place called Shiloh, which is about 35 miles north of Jerusalem. Jerusalem did not even figure into this at first. We are going from around the 15th century BC when Moses was leading the children [of Israel] out of Egypt, but it came down to the time of David and Solomon about 1000 BC — 500 years later — before the Temple was finally constructed out of stone in Jerusalem. That was done by Solomon, the son of King David.

That Temple existed there until the early 500s BC when it was destroyed by the Babylonians under King Nebuchadnezzar. It stayed in complete ruins with no stones on top of one another for about 70 years, and then we have this story in the Bible how under a person by the name of Zerubbabel and the High Priest Joshua, they built a new Temple, much [less] significant to the other in the same place. It stayed there on the Temple Mount in the City of David until it was destroyed to being like the hull of a building in the time of the Maccabees. That goes down to the middle of the 2nd Century BC.

And finally in the 1st century BC, near the end in 20 BC, just before the time of Jesus, King Herod rebuilt the Temple on a grandiose style, doubling its size. Josephus said, to make a long story short, that it was a square type of a building and it was 600 feet by 600 feet, on each side a square, and that it was 450 feet high. That is about a 45 story building.

What Is the "Temple Mount"

Rense: That's huge! I wanted to interrupt you right there and ask to clarify for people what the "Temple Mount" is. A lot of people do not know. We want to kind of keep this thing just in logical progression. They put this on the "Temple Mount." Give us a description of the "Temple Mount."

Martin: Absolutely. If a person would go to an atlas or look in the back of most Bibles, there are maps which will show where the City of David was located, in the southeastern corner of Jerusalem. That area

was known as Mount Zion. Mount Zion was a geographical term that was synonymous with the Temple Mount. There were two hills there. One was Zion itself, and just to the north, the Bible says there was another one called the Ophel. Ophel means “a swelling.” It was not a high-peaked kind of a mountain, but it was rather rounded on the top. Those two mountains, Zion and Ophel together, represented the city of David.

It was on the Ophel where Solomon built the Temple. He built it directly over the only natural water spring that there is in the Jerusalem area. It was called the Gihon Spring. This was all on the southeastern corner, Jeff, of the City of Jerusalem, even as it is in this very day. That was the original City of David.

Rense: Now hold on. The Temple that was built, you were describing something that was 45 stories tall?

Martin: In the time of King Herod, not in the time of Kings [of Israel and Judah]. It has quite a history to it as you know. Herod’s Temple was 450 feet from the bottom of the Kidron Valley on the southeast corner. Not the northeast corner, which was only about 300 [feet] there. It was about 200 hundred [feet] on the northwest corner. But on the southeast corner of the very place where Jesus was taken, it was called “the Pinnacle” in the New Testament, He was taken by Satan to jump off. That was a 450 foot [height], and you cannot even really see — Josephus, who was an eyewitness, said you could not really see the bottom of the Kidron Valley if you would look down. It was so dizzying, you would get dizzy doing it.

Rense: That is extraordinary. Hold on if you will, Dr. Martin, we need to take another break. Most people listening had no idea of the size of this structure. It is enormous. I want to ask you, how do we know it really was that big? Are we 100% sure of the dimensions. As an archaeologist, and a theologian, and a biblical scholar, Dr. Martin, as you have heard, took dozens of trips to the area. [commercial break]

Rense: [Part 4, MP3 format, begin @ 11 sec] Okay, back. ... Dr. Martin has been in the area of Jerusalem working over many years for a total of 31 visits. More to come, I would assume, yes Dr. Martin?

Martin: I hope so. It is a little difficult to go down there right now as we all know, and some of the areas I would like to visit and some of the people I would like to see about this very matter are so occupied with the problems, that it is not the nicest place on earth to be.

Rense: As your host and friend I would suggest you hold off a little longer.

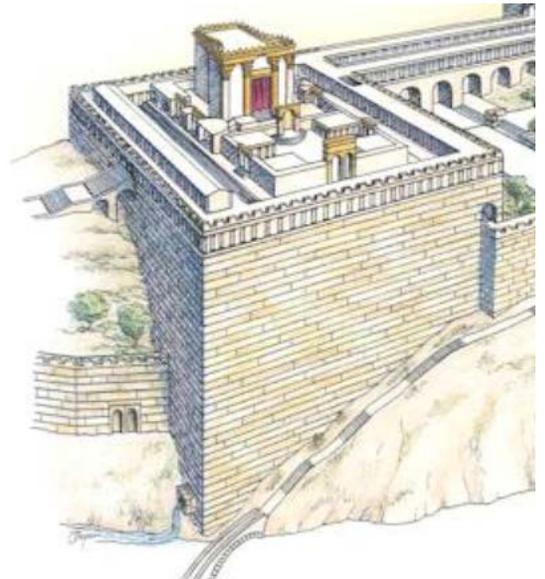
Martin: Thank you.

Rense: I am trying to put this picture in my mind of 600 by 600, two American football fields on a side, by 450 foot tall building, and this was what year again?

Martin: Herod started the rebuilding of this [Temple] to that size. He doubled the size of the former Temple to that size that you gave right there. He did that starting in about 20 BC. It was certainly that size when Jesus was here and when He was talking about the Temple, when He was inside the Temple, and He was referring to it, that was the Temple that He meant.

Rense: Was it just a Temple or was it office buildings? ... it had to be one of the most imposing structures of the ancient world, period.

Martin: Actually what it was, it was a tower that had an interior to it mainly of stairwells, so you could get up to the top. There was a platform on the top and three different levels, very small levels [of elevation] on top, and that was actually where the Temple courts were. It was in this 600 foot square building, like a penthouse more or less on top of a building. You go to Los Angeles or here in Portland [Oregon] for example there are some 45 story buildings here that occupy about a whole block, that



would be a very good description of what the Temple was like.^a

Rense: It's just amazing.

Martin: On top of the platform was where the actual Temple was with its three different compartments, and where the priests did their administration.

Rense: So it was essentially a large block structure. I don't want to use the term "pyramid," but it was pyramidal in design, mostly rock and block?

Martin: As a matter of comparison, Jeff, the Great Pyramid of Giza in Egypt is in height slightly smaller than the Temple would have been. Believe it or not, it would have been one of the wonders of the world, if it would have continued to exist to this day.

The Destruction of the Temple

Rense: That's my point, it had to take a heck of a lot of effort to tear the thing down!

Martin: Absolutely. And that is what Jesus said, and that is one of the reasons why I have written my book is to show that His prophetic teachings concerning that Temple, that not one stone would be left on top of another, had indeed taken place.

You cannot find any stones in that area that would suggest that the Temple actually existed that way, but we have the eyewitness accounts of Josephus, the Jewish historian, who accompanied Titus and the Roman legions there at the time of the destruction of the Temple from 66 to 70 AD. His eyewitness account is cogent. It is absolutely accurate. He never makes a mistake on what he is saying as far as measurements are concerned.

But our scholar friends, including me up to about 10 years ago, 5 years ago really, we would just say that Josephus had to be exaggerating in what he was saying because there is nothing with the Haram esh-Sharif, that is what we call the "Temple Mount" today, up at the Dome of the Rock and the Al Aqsa Mosque, none of those stones up there fit what Josephus says at all. They just absolutely do not.

Another ... surprise [to] people when they go to Jerusalem for the first time and if they are Christians, and they are well aware of the prophetic teachings in Matthew [chapter] 24 about Jesus' saying that the stones would not be on top of one another. They are rather aghast to find these gigantic stones — over 10,000 of them — still intact in their pristine condition in this rectangular building which was north of the Temple about 1,000 feet (600 feet actually), but up to Dome of the Rock it's about 1,000 feet north of where the Temple actually was.

Rense: That creates a little bit of a problem. On the one hand, you look at things the way you and your associates have determined them. Jesus looks magnificent in terms of His prophecy. On the other hand, people adhering to the current location would have a little reconciliation, wouldn't they?

Martin: They would have, definitely so. I remember that when I took my wife down there for the first time to see this, her question was, well, should there be any stones there? It took me a little bit of ingenuity to explain, as I did in those days and most scholars would assume to be the case, to be able to justify Jesus somewhat, is to say He was not talking about the outer walls of the Temple, but only the inner.

Rense: I remember that argument. I have heard that in the past.

Martin: That is normally the one that makes us breathe a little easier, you see. However, that is not what it means, because as I explain in my book, when that prophecy was given in Matthew 24 about the stones not being one on another, they were outside the Temple and looking back at the Temple, the exterior walls at that time. Clearly in the Bible the walls were as much a part of the Temple as the building itself. When

^a Dr. Martin's article, "[The Temple Was a Tower](#)" was published in December 2000 after the release of *Temples*. More than 25 articles by Dr. Martin, myself, and other authors, written mostly after Dr. Martin published *Temples*, can be found on the "[Temple Update Index](#)" webpage. DWS

you read Josephus' description of the city of Jerusalem, not only the Temple but the city after the Roman war was over in 70 AD, he said that any person who would come there, having seen the city before, would not even believe there was once a city in the area! It was so devastated.

Rense: They did not have explosives back then either. They had to pull these apart with what, slave labor?

Martin: That is correct and the reason for it is explained by Josephus himself. He said that after the war was over the Jews, like most people in the Middle East at that time, they did not have banks like we have today. They would hide their gold, usually in a wall of their homes or something of that nature. Frequently they would move it from one place to another and they would cement [plaster] it up. The Temple itself was a repository of great wealth. It was just like our Fort Knox for all practical purposes.

Rense: Oh, so the motive [of the Romans] was “goodies.”

Martin: Oh, absolutely. When the fires began to demolish the city, much of that gold began to melt and trickle down into the rubble. For the next six months after the war was over they left the 10th Legion there, 5,000+ soldiers to supervise the Jewish slaves that they still had. What they did, they turned every stone there was of that city upside down looking for the gold.

Rense: Is that where the expression [“leaving no stone unturned”] came from?

Martin: That is exactly it.

Rense: Is that right?

The Price of Gold After the Temple's Destruction

Martin: That is it. And the price of gold, Josephus said, went down a half throughout the whole of the eastern part of the Roman Empire, because of the gold that was taken from the ruins of Jerusalem.

Rense: Fifty percent because of the flooding of the market with new gold?

Martin: Yes, exactly.

Rense: It cut the price in half.

Martin: ... in half.

Rense: That is extraordinary.

Martin: It really is. That caused a depression to take place in the eastern part of the Empire. That was quickly overcome, [and] they were able to revive themselves. But Jerusalem was left in complete shambles. As I said, Josephus gives the description, and even Titus, who was the son of the Emperor [Vespasian] and later Emperor himself. He was the general in charge of the Roman army at the time.^b He made a trip after the destruction was over up to Antioch and came back about six months later. He made the statement that if I had not been here and conducted this war, I would not have realized there was a city in this area!

Rense: That's amazing.

Martin: Absolutely torn down, all the walls, every block of stone torn up, and that is what Jesus said for the whole city of Jerusalem would take place in the 19th chapter of Luke. I know it is rather astounding for His prophecy there ...

Rense: When did He say it would happen?

Martin: ... what Josephus says as an eyewitness. There you are. I have it in the book.

Rense: When did Jesus predict that this utter demolition would occur?

^b Before the final siege of Jerusalem in 70 AD, General Vespasian, the father of Titus, left to make his claim against other contenders for the Imperial throne of the Roman Empire. Vespasian and three others arose after Emperor Nero was assassinated in 68 AD. *DWS*

Martin: In 30 AD, just about two days before His crucifixion. It is found in Matthew 24, Mark 13, and Luke 21, the general prophecy.

Rense: What timeframe did he say this damage would occur ... the destruction?

Martin: He did not say. It was within the framework of the end of the age. He did not designate when that would be. In fact, the disciples asked Him, **“When will the end of the age be?”** He said He did not know, but **“neither the angels in heaven,”** but His Father [knew]. That is what He said at the time. In Matthew chapters 24 and 25 He gives quite a good deal of teaching there to tell the disciples that they really would not know the precise time. But the way He was talking, they surmised it would be soon. Obviously in 66 AD is when the Jews went to war with the Romans, they [the Jews] were expecting the Messiah to come in that period of time, and as a result the Romans brought their legions down and after about 3½ years they left Jerusalem in shambles and exactly fulfilling the prophecies that Jesus said. It all took place within a generation.

There are lots of scholars who feel that many of these prophecies have an end time repetitious type of meaning to them, and that type of interpretation has been around for a long time. But the initial prophecies were fulfilled from 66 to 70 AD.

Rense: We will talk more about prophecy as we continue. ... The book is *The Temples That Jerusalem Forgot*, an exhaustively well researched and brilliantly footnoted book by Dr. Ernest L. Martin ... I hope you find this interesting as we look at history as it pertains to today and tomorrow.

Rense: [Part 5, MP3 format, begin @ 23 sec] Welcome back. Dr. Ernest L. Martin, among many other things, has supervised over 450 college students at the most significant archaeological excavation ever conducted in Jerusalem for 2 months each year for a period of 5 years. His archaeological education program was featured in the Education Section of *Time Magazine* [in the September 1973 issue] as well. He has written 8 major research books that are advertised internationally in archaeological and theological periodicals, and over 600 planetariums around the world as well. He is a remarkable man. We are very honored to have him with us tonight. His book, *The Temples That Jerusalem Forgot* is, I would consider to be, one of the most important books in a long time dealing with the Middle East and what is causing the continuing strife and grief there.

Dr. Martin, has anyone ever put together a computer simulation in terms of a video in terms of what ancient Jerusalem may have looked like based on your research?

Martin: We are at the very moment, Jeff, doing that, and the preliminary runs that I have seen are spectacular. I hope to have it ready in an introductory manner in just about 2 weeks' time.^c

Rense: Wonderful.

Martin: In fact I am attending a meeting of theologians in Nashville at the SBL meeting. It is the Society for Biblical Literature where about 8,000 university and college and seminary professors meet, and I am a member of that organization, and I am getting to show all of this to the people there, the various professionals, and I will have a simulation of how it looked in 3D, digital at that time.

Rense: You are going to knock them out with that.

Martin: I hope so. All of us really need to start looking at this matter, because it is a very serious one, simply because of the contemporaneous events that are taking place. I actually feel that once this ... historical and geographical and archaeological information reaches all of us in the world (particularly the professionals) that it will cause many people to think twice before fighting over holy ground that is not so holy.

^c Dr. Martin narrates the short [“Video Presentation of the Temple Mount, May 2001.”](#) DWS

What Impact Would the Correct Temple Information Have?

Rense: Some people would say, Dr. Martin, right away that, eh, so what if it is not where it is, it is the principle of the thing?

Martin: Well, that is what they say, but in this particular case, I am afraid that you talk to many people in Israel, for example even Prime Minister Barak [who served 1999 to 2001] and others have made the statement that the Wailing Wall, which they consider to be part of the Western Wall of Herod's Temple, and I am saying it is actually Fort Antonia, and I am sure we can prove this without any doubt. They are saying that is the heart and soul of the Jewish religion. It really should not be, and it isn't really, when you get down to it. When people's emotions begin to run pretty wild, I am talking about all, not just Jewish, but Muslim and Christian, all of us, we find that these geographical areas become very important to us.

Rense: What would happen if these people were able to read your book, look at the video, sit down with you and be convinced that they are wrong? What would happen?

Martin: I think that it would take some time for it to sink in, to be quite honest, because we have been going in this fashion for about 100 years. Believe it or not Jeff, Mount Zion being on the southeast hill, which you will find in all Bible atlases now, every Bible atlas has it down there, and along with it should be the Temple, but do you realize that was not even solved until 1875, just a little over 100 years ago. If you go back 200 years, people were arguing in England, in France, and even in Jerusalem and in various other places, that was where Mount Zion was, and they place most of it on the southwest hill of Jerusalem, which is a half-mile away from where it actually is.

It should have been solved, this matter of the Temple, back there 125 years ago, but most of us, including myself, got our minds just centered on the Haram esh-Sharif, that is the rectangle building up there that is Fort Antonia, and we have equated it with the Temple Mount and it has become like it is chiseled in stone. Jeff, it is that solidly engrossed in people's minds.

I remember I was on a trip from London to Tel Aviv and I was talking to a very distinguished gentleman who was dressed like a Jewish rabbi, and we were having a very fine talk. He asked me why I was going to Jerusalem and I mentioned a little bit about this theory. He looked at me straight in the eye and said, "Preposterous! Completely preposterous!" You know, his response was not something that was unfamiliar to me. I would have said the same thing myself 10 years ago.

Rense: I understand.

Martin: This is the problem. It is going to take some time for this to sink in, because it is so revolutionary. It really is. I want people to read my book. I have sent it to some of the top authorities both in Israel, with the Muslims, and Christians, and I am trying to present it to all of our scholar friends coming up here in another two weeks' time.

Muslims' Reverence for the Haram esh-Sharif

Rense: That is going to be a very exciting conference. Why are the Muslims so wrapped up in that particular location? Help our listeners who don't know, what is their claim, their historical/religious claim to that very same territory?

Martin: This is a very interesting part. No claim was made to the Haram esh-Sharif, the building where [the rectangle structure containing] the Dome of the Rock, until the Muslims invaded Palestine in 638 AD, 638 years after Christ.

Rense: That's a long time.

Martin: A long time, and they were not really interested in the rock. A little later the Dome of the Rock was built over it, until the end of the 7th century. Once that happened, we find that [with] the domed building over it, they began to think that was the stone where maybe Abraham sacrificed Isaac. As a result of that it became rather important to them. The Muslims, step by step, began to have superstitious folklore and asso-

ciation with that rock, to the extent that within 200 years that rock now had become the site of what they called “Mohammad’s night journey.”

Rense: One of the holiest places in all Islam.

Martin: ... in all of Islam.

Rense: There is no historical precedent for it.

Martin: The Kaaba, which is in Mecca is the central shrine. Then Medina, but now the Dome of the Rock and the rock itself has become the third holiest shrine in all Islam.

Rense: Okay, but this is traceable back to the 7th century in terms of its origination? You can actually do this?

Martin: Definitely, without any question. We have the historical records there that are clear on that, but in the 200 to 300 years that followed that, the folklore that got established with that rock was phenomenal. They had Mohammed in this night journey, which is mentioned in the Koran, to the furthest mosque. There have been arguments whether or not that ever was Jerusalem. But anyway, the traditions finally centered on Jerusalem and on that rock.

There is a cave that is located on the southeast corner that you can walk into. I have been there many times, and that cave, according to Muslim tradition — now get this — it happened because when Mohammed and his horse Baruk [some spell it “Barak”] were going into heaven, the angel Gabriel was accompanying them and lots of other of the prophets, so the story goes, and the rock, mind you, wanted to go into heaven with them. The rock began to ascend and it got up about 6 feet into the air and then stopped. We find that Gabriel’s hand stopped the rock from going. The cave that you see there now is the result of the rock falling back somewhat, but not going back, all the way back. That is the type of tradition that we have with place after place after place in Jerusalem. Whether a person wants to believe it or not, which of course is crazy in my view. It is insanity to think anything like that, but let’s not blame the Muslims.

We Christians have as many stories associated with places down there which are complete fiction and the Jewish friends too, they have them as well. What I am attempting to do is to bring all of us back to rationality over these matters. I have no problem itself with the original documents: the New Testament, the Old Testament, even with the Koran, but it is the traditions and the folklore and the superstitions that have developed since those times, supplemented primarily by individuals, holy men, having visions, trances, and revelations that have created a complete nonsensical geography for Jerusalem.

The Dome of the Rock

Rense: Fascinating. On your [ASK] home page ... you will see an artist’s rendering of what the Temple looked like, an enormous edifice as we have been discussing here on the program. So the Dome of the Rock is not over the Temple?

Martin: No, it is not. In actual fact, the Dome of the Rock is over a former Christian church, which I have fully documented. It is so clear it makes me wonder why we haven’t seen it before. It was formerly a church there. It was called the Church of the Holy Wisdom. It was built in the Byzantine period about ... 150 years before the Muslim’s invaded. It was to cover that rock on which they felt, the Christians of the time, that Jesus’ footprints were when He stood before Pilate in the Praetorium as He was sentenced to death ...

Rense: ... at that very rock.

Martin: ... at that very rock. They said that they could show you where Jesus footprints were. Now that was in the Praetorium, and you know Jeff, the Praetorium means Fort Antonia. Clearly, even when you take the Scriptural reference [John 19:13], which is called “the rock” or “the pavement,” that was the rock that the Dome of the Rock now covers and it was formerly a Christian church raised up in the Byzantine period, and that the Islamic people at the end of the 7th century turn into a Muslim shrine.

Rense: Wow, wow, what a history. This is very illuminating to say the least. I hope you are enjoying it, We have some more ground to cover with Dr. Ernest L. Martin. His extraordinary book, *The Temples That Jerusalem Forgot*. ...

Rense: [Part 6, MP3 format, begin @ 26 sec] It could be that much of the bloodshed, fighting, strife, turmoil, grief that is ongoing in the Middle East now is being predicated on false premises. No one is being accused of doing it deliberately, it just happened that way. We are talking with Dr. Ernest L. Martin about where the location of the Temple actually is, and it is not apparently where the Wailing Wall is, according to his research, which goes back a long way. He has again spent many, many years working and studying this very carefully. The issue of the position of the Temple is central to the book and it is fascinating to read some of the descriptions that are in the book. The quotations are — there are multitudes of them. Let me just read one little part here. We can now continue with the more detailed description of the Temple and Jerusalem as provided by Aristeas.

“We of modern times possess the actual written records of Aristeas. Professor Gifford of England translated an English version of this early writer which gives you Eusebius’ rendition. Let us recall that Aristeas was speaking of the Jerusalem of his day (early third century before Jesus). In his description of Jerusalem and the Temple, he tells us that the interior of the Temple within it, there was an important geographical feature that will serve as a topographical benchmark for determining where the Temple was actually located. He said there was within the Temple a natural spring gushing up [this would have been an artesian spring] that gave an abundance of water to the entire sanctuary. He could not be clearer. Here is a translation of some of his descriptive material.

[quoting Aristeas] **‘There is an inexhaustible reservoir of water as would be expected from an abundant spring gushing up naturally from within [the Temple] itself, there being moreover wonderful and indescribable cisterns underground of five furlongs [3,000 feet away according to the drawings].’**

• Ernest Martin, *Temples*, 288–289

It goes on and on, but he is quite clear about there being water under that Temple. Now, do you still see today a spring in the area of your concern, Dr. Martin?

Martin: Of course, the only spring that there is in Jerusalem and the only one that Aristeas could be referring to was the Gihon Spring, which is down on the southeast corner of the City of David where virtually all Bible maps place Zion. Zion is in the Bible synonymous with the Temple. It is over the Gihon Spring. There is only one spring in the Jerusalem area. For another five miles around you will not find any other. Not only did Aristeas say that in the 3rd century BC, but in the 1st century AD Tacitus, the Roman historian describing the Jewish-Roman war in 66–70 AD, he also said that inside the Temple was, and he used the same term, **“an inexhaustible spring that sprang forth water.”** There is only one spring that could possibly be, it’s the Gihon, and it is there for anyone to see it at the present time.

In fact, you can go there, see the spring ushering out of the side of the mountain. There is a tunnel that was constructed in the time of King Hezekiah in the 8th century BC, about a quarter of a mile long that goes underneath the mountain down to the southern end of the old city of David ...

Rense: It’s safe to walk through then?^d

Martin: ... and the water goes through that, so there can only be one area, Jeff, where by eyewitness description that Temple was. It was on the Ophel Mound, just above the Gihon Spring.

Rense: It’s all here in the book. It is remarkable, the original Temple over the Gihon Spring and on and on. I am just curious as to what this work, this discovery, this assemblage of existing data is going to do to

^d Yes, it is safe to walk through Hezekiah’s Tunnel. In fact, you have to pay to go through it. I have done it myself, and so have tens of thousands of others. DWS

people, if they will actually take the time to read it.

Martin: I feel what it should do is to make us sit back, all of us who are in the field of history and theology, the professionals and so forth, in these fields, and ask ourselves the question, have we been perpetuating even in our teaching preposterous myths which arise from superstitious beliefs rather than the actual geographical and historically demonstrable truths which we have in front of us. I am hoping the present belligerents in the Palestinian area at the present time could read this book. All sides, Muslims, Christians, Jews, and others, and once they realize that they are fighting over the wrong places in the first place, I would hope a little bit of rationality might come into their minds when they sit around a conference table.

Rense: I just cannot imagine the Jews giving up the Wailing Wall.

Martin: Well, it's hard. It is going to be very difficult. I talked to one lady in Jerusalem one time in the store about it, she was very intelligent, and she said, as far as she was concerned, her religion, her Judaism was more of a spiritual nature and it would not upset her so much, but she said, [for] many of the people I do know, it would be a deadly blow.

Rense: It would be devastating. [Commercial break, begin @ time 7:45 (7 minutes, 45 seconds)] We are reading Dr. Martin's book, *The Temples That Jerusalem Forgot*, all about the location of the Temple. I am reading that Tacitus' description. It's just fascinating to read what was written so long ago. You must revel in your work, Dr. Martin.

Martin: It is very entertaining, I should say that. At the same time when I read history it's almost like reading about the present time. It seems like as long as humans have been here on the earth, we experience the same difficulties, the same noise, that others have. It is really quite a remarkable thing, and that has been one of my points that I have tried to make in my professional career, that what we really should do is to get back to the documents, what they actually say, rather than making interpretations on the documents, or believing what later people 2 to 3 to 400 years after the documents were written, what they say. That is where our confusion comes in, Jeff.

Rense: That's ego, and that's human beings doing what human beings do, basically reinvent the past, to reinterpret it. ...

Martin: We are all guilty of it. That's the point, it is a human affliction.

Rense: Here is Tacitus' description and again Dr. Martin's book is loaded with marvelous reading material. It is history come alive. "**The Temple resembled a citadel.**" Remember we were talking about something 600 feet on a side, 450 feet tall, that's 45 stories.

"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 into 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 every provision against the most protracted siege."

• Ernest Martin, *Temples*, 285

Was the Temple then basically a fortress?

Martin: Yes it was. You hit the nail on the head. Josephus, the eyewitness who lived through the whole war, he was born in 37 AD and died about 105 AD. He wrote the *Antiquities of the Jews*, a long work ... which is parallel to the Bible. Then also he wrote seven books, one long work on the Jewish war itself. He mentions about the Temple itself being a fortress. He says there were actually three fortresses in Jerusalem. [1] There was the fortress of Herod, Herod's palace in the upper city, just to the west. [2] Then there was the Temple, which itself was a fortress, and intended to be that. [3] Just to the north of the Temple, and overlooking the Temple and larger than the Temple was Fort Antonia.

Rense: ... larger.

Martin: Larger, much [larger]. He actually says that Fort Antonia was so large that it could contain “several cities.” We can say that’s an exaggeration, but that’s what he says, and that it was capable of holding a whole division, a “legion” [the largest Roman military unit] actually for the Roman Imperial army, which would be a division of troops, 5,000 but with support people, about 10,000 troops could live in this building called Fort Antonia. It overshadowed the Temple. In fact, from the north anyone coming into Jerusalem could not even see the Temple because of this huge massive fort standing in the way.

By the way, you are seeing when you go to Jerusalem today, the remnants of that very building called the Fort Antonia, and that is today mistaken for the Temple Mount, but it is not. The “Temple Mount” where the Dome of the Rock is, there are no springs there at all. The only spring in Jerusalem, and I am glad you are quoting Tacitus again, Jeff, he just gives this eyewitness account that the spring was inside the Temple precincts.

The Waters of the Gihon Spring

Rense: What about the Crusades? Did anybody come back with a viable history of Jerusalem? Did they do any scholarship when they were there? Did they take the Arabs, the historians the Arabic civilization spawned and try to put it together?

Martin: We have pretty good accounts of what happened both from the European and also the Muslim side, and the Gihon Spring by the way is mentioned there. However, at the time that the Crusades, which started in 1099 AD, that spring had just turned bitter.

That was a very important point that I have in my book, that as long as the Temples were there and the Gihon Spring was operating normally and naturally, Josephus, the Jewish historian, he described the waters as being some of the nicest water that you could possibly imagine, just really fresh, and beautiful, and wonderful.

But in about 1077 AD, somewhere between 1033 and 1077, we cannot pinpoint it exactly, there was a major earthquake in the area and after that earthquake those waters turned bitter. They have been bitter to this very day. If you go down there, it is advisable that you do not drink any of the water that comes from the Gihon Spring. I would suspect that if you went to the Old City and walked through it and then went down to the Gihon Spring to see the nice bubbling water coming out down there, you would know where it is coming from. It is not too palatable today.

In the old days it was the waters of salvation, as ~~David~~ Isaiah described them as being [Isaiah 12:3^e] fresh water coming from out under the Ophel Mound, and within the Temple precincts. In the time of Jeremiah, he does say that there was a bitterness to the water at that time that lasted for a short period [Jeremiah 8:14, 9:15, and 23:15].

Rense: How much of a flow ...

Martin: ...We do find that from time to time the waters do change their characteristics, but in the time the Temples were there it was fresh water.

Rense: How much of a flow are we talking about?

Martin: It depends. It is a gurgling spring. It is called a Karst spring. A Karst spring is one that does not flow all the time. It will flow for about 45 minutes, and then it will not flow for an hour or two or three or four. In the springtime when the snows in the mountains around (and it does snow by the way in Jerusalem in some years), but it is melting and you get heavy rainstorms. The water will come forth from the Gihon Spring quite copiously. But it still has a Karst effect. It will not come continuously.

Rense: Stand by and we will pause and come right back to Dr. Ernest L. Martin and his book *The Temples That Jerusalem Forgot*.

^e Most modern translations translate “wells” (in the King James Version) as “springs” or “fountain.” DWS

Fort Antonia

Rense: [Part 7, MP3 format, begin @ 14 sec] We are back and looking at some of the plates in the book and there is a marvelous drawing of a classic Roman fort which I guess Fort Antonia would have looked like very much. It is every extraordinarily detailed. Where did this diagram come from?

Martin: It comes from a book written about the Roman Imperial army that has just come out recently, and there were quite a number of pictures of ancient Roman forts. The one that is in Jerusalem, which I am saying is the Haram esh-Sharif, it is very close to the one in Rome itself in dimensions. In fact, it is slightly larger.

Rense: The detail work in this fort is extraordinary.

Martin: Yes indeed. Each Roman fort was a city in itself. It was something similar to our own armed forces in Europe. When we go to a base in Europe we see Little America there, with everything from McDonalds, etc. The Romans did virtually the same thing wherever they went, particularly in Jerusalem. That fort was built by King Herod, but in 6 AD just while Christ was an infant, it was taken over by the Romans. The Romans continued [to occupy] it until the destruction of Jerusalem.

In fact, after the destruction was over, that was the place that Titus, the Roman general, selected for the 10th Legion to remain in the area to supervise the region. What better place than the former Roman fort?

As a matter of fact, Jeff, I think it would be good for your listeners to know that Josephus, he records what happened just after the war, three years later down at Masada, is where the 960 Jewish remnants of the war killed themselves before [instead of] surrendering to General Silva and the Roman Army. We know the story of Masada. It is quite a beautiful and interesting story.^f

That happened three years after the war was over, and Eleazar who was in charge of the Jewish people there at that time said that the only thing left in Jerusalem — he said the Temple was in ruins, the city was nothing — the only thing left was the Roman encampment that had been there before. Of course, the only thing that has come down to us today from the Herodian period with the rocks or stones still in place is the Haram esh-Sharif, and that is what he was talking about.

Rense: How much of it, is it just the one wall?

Martin: No, there are four walls. The northern wall is practically gone, but the eastern wall is practically intact, the southern and also the western [walls]. There is one stone in the western wall that you can get down to, you can climb down to it, that weighs 400 tons of stone.^g

Rense: That's of Egyptian proportions.

Martin: Exactly. Some of the stones around the southwest corner are 60 feet long and about 4 to 5 feet high and they are in the neighborhood of 70 tons — each stone. And there over 10,000 of them.

The Temple and the Time of Its Destruction

Rense: I still want to know how they took that Temple apart. I guess they can go down quicker than they go up.

Martin: The Temple was not only a fortress, it was like Fort Knox, it was the treasury of the Jewish nation. Josephus, remarkably, talking about human nature and civilization, he says the Jews actually had what we call safety deposit boxes in the Temple that [Jewish] people from all over the Roman and Parthian worlds, they would actually leave in care of the priests there. In some cases it was the treasury of the nation.

^f I highly recommend you find a DVD (at your local library perhaps) or on the internet of the nearly 7 hour miniseries titled *Masada*. It stars Peter O'Toole as the Roman general Cornelius Flavius Silva and Peter Strauss as the Jewish Zealot Eleazar. Clips from the miniseries are shown at the introductory video when you begin a tour at Masada. DWS

^g The walkway has been dug out so this massive stone, in a tunnel underground north of the Wailing Wall, now is accessible. The 400 tons equals 800,000 pounds. DWS

Rense: Tell me a little bit more about the war with the Jews. It occurred over how many years again?

Martin: It took place from 66 AD from the autumn time just before the Succoth as it's called, or the Feast of Tabernacles in the autumn of 66 to 70 AD [when] it was destroyed. The Temple went up in flames on the 10th day of the 5th month, the month of Ab; that's in our August time. Remarkably, Jeff, that Temple went up in flames by accident as a matter of fact, and Titus, the Roman general, we are told, tried to put out the flames, I mean to have his troops to do it, but it was impossible to do. It was completely destroyed and burnt down — not that the stones were, but I mean they fell down and all the support system was destroyed^h — on that 9th and 10th of Ab on the exact anniversary that the Temple was destroyed in the time of Nebuchadnezzar, some 600 years before. Exactly on the same day.

Rense: Extraordinary. They say there are no accidents, who knows.

Martin: It makes you wonder, doesn't it?

Rense: It does. That must have been one heck of a conflagration.

Martin: It was. There are some beautiful paintings of it that artists have rendered and honestly it would have been a conflagration that could have been seen from the moon, easily.

Rense: It sounds like it. The wars themselves were fought in and around Jerusalem over what period of countryside was this conflict carried out? How wide-ranging were these battles?

Martin: They were mostly confined, the one that destroyed Jerusalem and the Temple was confined to the city itself at that time. Later on in the 2nd century in 132 to 135 in the time of [Emperor] Hadrian, there were wars all over the area. That was the final Jewish war with the Romans. The one we are talking about here occupied the space of Jerusalem itself. There were ... four legions in actual fact, with auxiliaries. Each of them had about 5,000 men.

Rense: It's amazing that people are still dying today. It is almost a killing ground as you look at it over the millennia.

Martin: Absolutely. I have written about some prophecies in the Book of Zechariah that actually speak of a time of reconciliation coming and it appears to be before what we Christians call the second advent of Christ, a spirit of grace and supplication, Zechariah says, is going to come to that area [Zechariah 12:10]. From any perspective that we should look at today, that description seems so remote that it would be impossible of happening. But on the other hand, it is in the prophecies that a reconciliation among the peoples there is to transpire. Of course, I would wish that would happen soon.

Rense: I completely agree. This book is again just published. It is *The Temples That Jerusalem Forgot*. I would urge you to get a copy of it. Pass it on to anyone else who is interested as well. All you can do is start at the bottom, Dr. Martin, and spread the word. You are going to take it to the conference and you said 6,000 or 8,000 people are going to attend?

Martin: About 8,000 of us. We'll attend there from the various universities around the world. These are the top scholars. I will be displaying it at that time. ... I do believe that soon people throughout the world will begin to understand this matter much more than they do right now. When we do find out that people are fighting over the wrong places, again I say Jeff, I hope that it will cause us to look in other directions before we start fighting again.

Rense: I completely agree.

[The discussion diverts to another subject for the rest of [Part 7](#).

Rense: [\[Part 8, MP3 format, begin @ 39 sec\]](#) Hour number three, I'm Jeff Rense on six days a week for three hours a night as we roll into election week of the year 2000, the election the day after tomorrow. ... I don't know, who are you going to vote for Dr. Martin? ...

^h The interior of the Temple was lined with cedar and other fine woods. The stone walls had wood supports. DWS

Martin: I didn't realize how poetic you were.

Rense: The book is *The Temples That Jerusalem Forgot*, clearly one of the most, I think, potentially important books done on the Middle East and our ancient and contemporary history in my lifetime. This is extraordinary when you consider that for the last 100+ years people have been living on the wrong assumptions. History proves them wrong, does it not?

The Wailing Wall

Martin: It certainly does. The matter of the Wailing Wall for example, the Western wall, I was rather shocked to find out myself about ten years ago that Jewish participation and that particular section which we now call the Wailing Wall was only in effect from about 1520 AD onward. The two stories both promoted by Jewish historians of the 17th century clearly show that it was first of all a Christian shrine or place, and then the Muslims took it over and cleaned it up, but the Jewish participation in the area of the Wailing Wall did not take place until the time of Rabbi Isaac Luria, called the "Ari" or "the Lion," most Jewish people would certainly know of him, in the year 1570. Before that time no Jewish person had ever gone to the Wailing Wall for any spiritual reason whatsoever, I mean the [place] we are seeing in the news every day.

Rense: Is that because they knew it wasn't part of the Temple?

Martin: By that time most of the Jews considered the Temple to be at the Dome of the Rock. From the time of the Crusades onward, Jeff, most people: Jews, Christians, and the Muslims accepted the Dome of the Rock. I have in my book though, considerable, abundant evidence, to show that prior to the Crusades, particularly prior to 1077 AD, all Jews knew clearly that the Temple was over the Gihon Spring that we have been talking about.

I have absolute evidence ... in my book in which I have material from what they call the Gineza Synagogue contemporary writings which show that the Temple was south of the Haram esh-Sharif, and down on the Ophel Mound, and it is actually in these records that I have accumulated in my book. The Wailing Wall we have today is a "modern" invention — well, not modern, it's 400 to 380 years. Believe it or not, this is documented very well in, of all places, [an Israeli] Ministry of Defense publication on the Western Wall. It is all documented there by our Jewish scholars themselves that this is the case.

Rense: That's amazing. Again, this is going to make a tremendous impact at the conferences in two weeks. We'll see.

Martin: I hope so.

Rense: ... I just hope this information gets out and is given proper and due consideration by all those at the top levels of both sides in this continuing conflict, because it needs to be factored in.

Martin: You are absolutely right, and I want to thank you personally for this opportunity of introducing it to your listeners, because in actual fact, your program is the first on record of giving this information out in this fashion. So I want to thank you. ...

Rense: The emotional impact of your work will run the gamut.

Martin: I hope so. I feel that what I have given is basically the truth. I would be silly to say that everything I have in the book is 100% accurate. As far as I know, it is, but the thing is, if there is a little brick here scarred on my evidence, the walls are going to stand. I have not the slightest doubt that what I have stated in that book is true.

Rense: It's an extraordinary book to look at and consider, and let's find out what happens. All you can do is put it out there, as they say.

Time Speeding Up?

Rense: We come across another holiday season. They seem to show up about every six months. Have you been noticing how time is speeding up?

Martin: My goodness, yes.

Rense: It is really silly. Not only is time increasing in its rapidity, but people everywhere, Dr. Martin, seem to be on edge. They are just not — there is an undercurrent of anxiety that is international.

Martin: You're right. The ubiquitous anxiety that is seemingly around now in this time of great prosperity for the United States [remember, this was recorded in November 2000], and yet there is seemingly an uncertainty that is hovering on the horizon.

Rense: Does the Bible talk about these particular times to your satisfaction in terms of really prophetically preparing us for what we are going through now?

Martin: I personally feel so. I feel that everything is on schedule as far as the prophetic scenario is concerned, but I read in the Book of Zechariah (particularly the last six chapters) which seems to pinpoint the effects in Jerusalem and in Israel in the present time. It also gives a very nice outcome to what will happen down there, and prior to the Second Advent of Christ. Good times are going to be coming down there, if the prophecies in Zechariah mean anything at all in the 12th chapter.

Rense: Yet you did make a point earlier that this seems to be almost a cyclical buildup to not much, and then it cycles around again, and again, and again.

Martin: That's right. Even in the Book of Isaiah, it speaks in about the 43rd chapter about former things will take place in the future, as though everything in life is cyclical ... or repetitive. We find that also in the Book of Ecclesiastes by Solomon. Several places he states that.

Rense: I think that one of the interesting things about your book *The Temples That Jerusalem Forgot*, and I hope it is given adequate coverage at the conference, is that you have again elevated Christ's teachings, you brought them up half a level or two.

Martin: I hope so ...

Rense: His prophecy is borne out by your research now.

Martin: I gave the book to a Catholic priest up in San Francisco, and we were having some convivial times, social engagement, and he read the book and came back to me 2 days later, rather ashen-faced (like you have, and I am very thankful for your recommendation), he said this is going to actually change history. But he said, from what you have said, I cannot see any other answer but that is the truth. This goes beyond denominational lines. It is not a matter of it being Protestant, Catholic, or Orthodox, or Muslim or Jewish.

Rense: You are simply rediscovering ...

Martin: Clear historical fact that I am trying to give forth to the world.

Rense: You are rediscovering our real literal history.

Martin: And like I said, I have a deep respect for the documents: the biblical documents, but also the historical documents. And whereas I have found that when people say the historical documents are exaggerating what they say, I find in most cases the exaggeration is because of our misinterpretation of history.

[**Editor's Note:** This ends the portion of the interview about Dr. Martin's book, *The Temples That Jerusalem Forgot*. There is a shorter discussion on Dr. Martin's first book, *The Star That Astonished the World*, which I will present in a separate article.]

Ernest L. Martin, November 2000
David Sielaff, January 2017