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# Response to Gihon Temple Objections

by David Sielaff

Read the February 1, 2019 Commentary, "[A Small Golden Bell](#)"

Then read the "[February 2019 Newsletter](#)"



**Those who oppose the non-traditional site of the Israelite Temples in Jerusalem above and west of the Gihon Spring are afraid. They fear questions from supporters of the Gihon location. As you will read, their evidence is largely based on assumptions with its strongest proofs being traditions of men, not biblical and historical evidence. The Israelite Temples were all located at the same place from the time of the construction of the first Temple by King Solomon of Israel to the destruction of the “second” Temple of Herod by the Romans in 70 AD.**

When Dr. Ernest L. Martin began researching Josephus and Scripture regarding the location of the Jerusalem Temples, he had an open mind. He was willing to grow in knowledge (as well as grace, 2 Peter 3:18) and accept the evidence in spite of his own tendency to accept the traditional understanding — that the site of all Jerusalem Temples was somewhere on the Haram esh-Sharif, also known as the Al Aqsa Mosque Platform. In 1983 my wife Robin and I traveled to Israel with a group led by Dr. Martin. His understanding at that time was that the Holy of Holies of the Temple was at the “Dome of the Spirits” on the Haram, just northwest of the Dome of the Rock.<sup>1</sup> In this article I review two videos.

## *Lectures by Temple Institute Leaders, November 2018*

There was a recent critique of the Gihon Temple Mount evidence given on November 7, 2018. Rabbi Chaim and his son Hillel Richman gave lectures about the Temple at a conference in Rogers, Arkansas. Chaim Richman is the International Director of the [Temple Institute of Jerusalem](#). His archaeologist son, Hillel Richman, presented first. His is of primary interest and it is titled, "[Hillel Richman: The True Location of the Temple Mount](#)" (accessed January 2, 2019). His father spoke second, "[Rabbi Chaim Richman: The Dedication of the Third Temple](#)" (accessed January 3, 2019). I will deal with his presentation at the end of this article.

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<sup>1</sup> This small structure was also known as the Dome of the Tablets. In fact, when I stood inside the dome to photograph the eastern gate, Dr. Martin suggested I not do so as it might offend Muslims. It apparently had some mild holiness for them.

If you want to learn what Dr. Martin taught in 1983 until 1995 or so, view the well-produced 1995 video, remastered in 2011. "[Ready To Rebuild: Revisited featuring Dr. Jimmy DeYoung](#)" (1 hour, 12 minutes). They had all the answers before the challenge to their accepted and erroneous theory by Dr. Martin and other researchers.

On November 11, 2018 in Lubbock, Texas, Hillel presented the same lecture, "[Hillel Richman: The True Location of the Temple Mount: Fully Illustrated](#)" (accessed January 12, 2019). **I recommend you watch this video** because the graphics are inserted into the video for a clearer presentation. Hillel states:

[1:35, quote] **The reason that we've decided to respond to such theories is because they are becoming so pervasive among the uneducated. If one were to type "the true location of the Temple" on YouTube, a dozen videos proposing various theories would appear.**

**The propagation of this lie is becoming a dismissal of Jewish history and disempowering of Jewish identity and the heritage regarding the Jews' most important site. Moreover, it's becoming a desecration of the name of God of Israel.**

Hillel goes on to present his evidence why the theories of a Gihon Temple site are wrong.

These are strong words. To my knowledge, no one who supports the Gihon site of the Jewish Temples intends the evidence to be **"a dismissal of Jewish history"** or a **"disempowering of Jewish identity and the heritage ..."** And certainly I never thought anyone I spoke to about this historical correction about the Temples ever had or intended **"a desecration of the name of [the] God of Israel."** God forbid! On the contrary, on all three points the exact opposite is intended. Truth is more important than error, and truth rules when tradition is found to be in error.

Would anyone hold to a tradition knowing it to be wrong? I believe Hillel and Chaim Richman are honorable men seeking truth. The good work they have done and are doing (being only one of several such organizations) preparing for rebuilding of the Temple, and all they are doing, will be valid, proper, and ritually valuable within Jewish and proper scriptural tradition, according to whatever the Jews themselves decide.<sup>2</sup> God will honor their work.

They simply have the wrong location as to where the Temple was located. The traditional site has been challenged. Therefore, I challenge them to prove that their traditional site is biblically and historically true.<sup>3</sup>

### *Hillel Salomon's Issues*

Hillel shows the ASK rendering of the Temple/Fort Antonia complex [at 3:00 minutes]. I appreciate him doing so. We also thank him for showing Dr. Ernest Martin's book, [The Temples That Jerusalem Forgot](#) (free online and for purchase), Marilyn Sams' book, [The Jerusalem Temple Mount Myth](#) (E-book, and in paperback, 2018), and Robert Cornuke's book, [Temple: Amazing New Discoveries that Change Everything about the Location of Solomon's Temple](#) (Revised edition). The number in brackets indicates time in Hillel's video.



Review: Hillel Richman Showing Disruptive Books

[3:50] **The first premise is that the biblical term *Sion* or Zion in English refers to the City of David. Therefore, the Temple was in the City of David. All the biblical references to Zion that are associated with the Temple refer to the City of David since that is where Zion was.**

**The second notion is that the Temple required a live water source or a spring and the only spring in the area is the Gihon Spring right under the ridge of the City of David, therefore in**

<sup>2</sup> There have been moves to reestablish a religious governing Jewish body, a Sanhedrin. It has met with mixed support by the various Jewish religious factions, but there will be some such organization to build the Temple before Christ returns.

<sup>3</sup> Read how Dr. Ernest Martin began his research leading many to accept a Gihon location in the Introduction to [The Temples That Jerusalem Forgot](#). If you still think he had nefarious motives after reading his introduction, contact me. Dr. Martin wrote:

**"Any information that you readers may have or discover that either support or detract from the conclusions that I have made in this book, would be greatly appreciated by me."**

Dr. Martin died in January 2002. Let me renew Dr. Martin's request, contact me at: [david@askelm.com](mailto:david@askelm.com).

order to supply the water for the Temple, the Temple had to be above that spring.

[Third] like we said, the enclosure known today as the Temple Mount fits exactly to their requirements of the Roman Fortress Antonia, and therefore it has to be that fortress.

And the fourth one is the prophecy in Matthew that not one stone here will be left upon another which will not be torn down, so how could it be that we have this enclosure with stones dating 2,000 years back, if we have this prophecy.

This is not an outline of Hillel's presentation but we know what is important to him.

In this article I am only responding for Dr. Ernest Martin's work although I will access the excellent work of others that support the Gihon Temple evidence. Total agreement is never expected.

### *Hillel's Issues and Evidence: Zion*

Regarding Hillel's first premise, the word *Sion* or Zion does occur 154 times and its meaning changes depending upon the context. His evidence proving the first premise starts at [5:14].

Zion never was identified exclusively with the Temple. The term Zion occurred before the Temple was built. In one sense, wherever God's presence is, Zion could be located. Moses spoke of, "mount Sion [Zion], which is Hermon" (Deuteronomy 4:48), just before Israel crossed to the Promised Land. Mt. Hermon in northern Israel was recognized as a place of YHWH's presence. The psalmist wrote of the "mountains of Zion":

**"As the dew of Hermon, ... that descended upon the mountains of Zion: for there YHWH commanded the blessing, even life for evermore."**

• Psalm 133:3

"Sion" is also in heaven (Hebrews 12:22), again where God's presence is. God can expand the holiness of an area to encompass several hills or the entire city of Jerusalem. God can also contract Zion to a single hill in Jerusalem, or move His holiness to the Mount of Olives as the Christian historian Eusebius thought, as Ezekiel said happened after the first Temple was destroyed, and as Josephus testified occurred before the Jewish rebellion began leading to the destruction of the Herodian Temple.

Six months after *Temples* was published in 2000, Dr. Martin addressed this issue in an August 2000 article whose title explains his understanding about Zion, "The Expansion and Portability of Zion."<sup>4</sup> He adds information not in *Temples*. As far as Dr. Martin is concerned (and not speaking for other authors who promote a Gihon Temple), yes, the Temple in Jerusalem at the time of Solomon, the location of Zion was in the City of David. This objection was addressed directly by Dr. Martin in his May 2001 article, "A Critique by Dr. Leen Ritmeyer/Rebuttal by Dr. Martin" and a different approach in my June 1, 2018 Commentary "Zion and the City of David."

Hillel then reads several verses referring to the "mountain" upon which the Temple was built. But all the verses apply to a Gihon location as well. As Dr. Martin shows in *Temples*, from the time of Solomon to the time of Simon the Hasmonean the site of the Temple was the highest part of the spur or ridge of the City of David, higher even than the rock under the Dome of the Rock (the false "temple mount" north of the City of David). The site of the 1<sup>st</sup> Temple of Solomon was cut to bedrock in the time of Simon.

### *The View of the Temple*

[16:20] Hillel then tells of viewing the Temple from Mt. Scopus, suggesting that a Temple located at the Gihon could not be seen from Mt. Scopus. Scopus is north-northeast of the City of David and northeast of the Dome of the Rock. The Gihon Temple site can be seen as clearly as the traditional "temple site" can be from



Hillel Richman

<sup>4</sup> Two other articles regarding Zion are Professor George Wesley Buchanan's, "Running Water in the Temple of Zion" and another article by Dr. Martin, "The Seven Hills of Jerusalem."

Mount Scopus. The photograph Hillel shows is taken from behind trees looking directly west to the Dome of the Rock. A photograph from the southern aspect of the top of Mt. Scopus would easily show the entire Gihon area, the slope above it, and the City of David. Dr. Martin anticipated Hillel:

**“... we read in Josephus that Fort Antonia hid the Temple from anyone approaching Jerusalem directly from the north,<sup>5</sup> but if the approach were slightly to the east at a place called ‘Scopus’ (that is, ‘Viewpoint’) on the northern spur of the Mount of Olives, Josephus said that the Sanctuary could first be seen as ‘the grand pile of the Temple gleaming afar’ penetrating upward above the southwestern horizon.”**

• *Martin, Temples, 260–261*

A simple viewing with a Google Earth 3-D map shows the Gihon area above the Kidron Valley can be seen from the southern part of Mt. Scopus. Certainly a 40-story structure on coming out of that valley was seen.

[17:34–18:55] Hillel cites *Mishnah* Pesahim 3.8 telling of a place he says is north of Jerusalem, still called Zofim today. From there he claims, the Temple (meaning the Haram) can be seen from the north. However, Herbert Danby’s English translation of the *Mishnah* Pesahim says:

**“... if a man had gone forth from Jerusalem and remembered that he still had with him flesh that was hallowed, if he had already passed Zofim<sup>[2]</sup> he may burn it there and then; but if not, he must return and burn it before the Birah with wood for the Altar-hearth.”**

• *Danby, Mishnah Pesahim 3.8, p. 140*

In footnote [2] on page 140 of Danby’s *Mishnah*, Zofim is identified as: **“Mount Scopus, the hill north-east of Jerusalem, on the northern road, from which the city first becomes visible.”** Danby says Mount Scopus *is* Zofim and not the Zofim identified by Hillel, directly north of the Haram. Josephus (an eyewitness) and Danby agree. Hillel disagrees with Danby, but agrees that Josephus is correct about Mount Scopus.

### ***Forgetting the Site of the Temple?***

[19:25] Hillel rejects the idea that the Jews could forget where their Temple was located. Citing Psalm 137:5–6, he says that stories from the Talmud (written and compiled several hundreds of years after the Temple’s destruction) as evidence the Jews did not forget, even though they do not give a precise location.

[21:50] Hillel says the Jews never forgot the correct site and rejects that their forgetfulness began with the Crusader period beginning in 1099 AD. He does not address the Muslim and Christian interactions in extensive historical narratives describing the process of transferred holiness from the Gihon site to the Haram esh-Sharif by Muslims and later Christians. He also ignores the role of Jewish sages Maimonides and Rabbi Isaac Luria, who led Jewish people to revere the Haram, where the Christians and Moslems then worshipped.<sup>6</sup>

Hillel also ignores the large number of Jewish scholars in the Middle Ages, during the Crusades and after, who remembered and wrote that the true site of the Temple was still in desolation and had no buildings upon it for hundreds of years up to their time. To the contrary, the Haram was the location of great architectural structures from the time of Constantine, with major military and large religious structures, with worshippers bustling around the “transferred” holiness from the original site of the Gihon Temple — in our opinion.

[23:15] Hillel speaks of Muslim inscriptions on the Haram. Those inscriptions in fact fit Dr. Martin’s evidence about the transference of holiness from the Gihon Temple to the Haram. This was a formal process acknowledged by the people of the time following the conquest of Jerusalem by Caliph Omar.

<sup>5</sup> Wars of the Jews 5:245–246:

**“... 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 [the city, the Temple, and Antonia]. ... that hill on which the tower of Antonia stood was the highest of these three, so did it adjoin to the new city [outside the City of David], and was the only place that hindered the sight of the temple on the north.”**

<sup>6</sup> [“Chapter 13, The First ‘Western \(Wailing\) Wall’”](#) and [“Chapter 14, The Actual Temple Site from 638 to 1099 C.E.”](#)

Dr. Martin explains the process of “[How the Jews Started to Lose the Temples Site](#)” presented on the ASK website in June 2000 (after *Temples* was published), and in the last chapter of *Temples*, “[Chapter 35: How Could the Rabbis Forget?](#)” (pages 474–475) where Dr. Martin wrote:

**“Firstly, I have clear historical documentation ... that shows that every Jewish person in the world was fully aware a generation before the time of Maimonides (1134–1205 C.E.) that the holy site of their former Temples was over the Gihon Spring in southeastern Jerusalem. But, a generation after the time of Maimonides there was NOT a Jew in the world who remembered this historical fact. Indeed, it was Maimonides himself who got the whole of the Jewish nation to turn their eyes from the true site of their Temples over the Gihon Spring. and made them focus on the fake site of the Dome of the Rock that they all recognize today.<sup>7</sup> I will show why and how Maimonides (the great rational philosopher) turned the whole Jewish nation to falsehood regarding the site of their holy Temples. The account is interesting indeed.**

**Secondly, ... the Jewish people in the 16<sup>th</sup> century followed the advice of Rabbi Isaac Luria (the Ari) and wrongly selected the western wall of the Haram esh-Sharif (formerly Fort Antonia) as the ‘Western Wall’ of Herod’s Temple. Truly, there was NOT a Jew in the world who paid the slightest respect to that ‘Western (Wailing) Wall’ before the 16<sup>th</sup> century. By following the false advice of Rabbi Isaac Luria, the whole of the Jewish nation has selected a wall to revere that was formerly a part of the Roman fortress that their ancestors in the first century held in highest contempt and disdain.**

**Thirdly, I will also soon reveal ... the full relationship of the true location of the site of the Temples over the Gihon Spring with the area on the southern spur of the Mount of Olives where Jesus was crucified (and the place of his resurrection at the site of the Pater Nostra Church). This new information will show even more relevance and significance to Jesus being the Christ [the Messiah of the Jews and Muslims]. This new historical material will make the messages of the Holy Scriptures come alive with truth as never before understood.”**

Dr. Martin completed the first and the second with articles but not the third point.<sup>8</sup> His declaration and evidence that Maimonides and Rabbi Isaac Luria guided people to the wrong spots is offensive to some Jews. They are two of the most revered sages today even though in their own time they were largely rejected for their theological teachings. These men taught what they thought was right, but they were mistaken.

### ***Hillel’s Issues and Evidence: the Size of the Temple***

[27:25] **Could we have put the Temple in the City of David? Let’s go and see that. So the Jewish tradition teaches that the Temple Mount itself, meaning the sanctified area, was 500 cubits square or about 861 feet square<sup>9</sup> or about 861 feet square. This cubit is the royal Egyptian cubit which is what was mostly used during the First Temple period, which is when the First Temple of Solomon was built, but if you were to take a 500 square cube and try to stick it over the City of David, you will be faced with a little bit of a problem and that is there is just no room. The square goes over into the valley and onto the Mount of Olives, and it is a big mess.**

**Response. First**, Hillel correctly says the 500 cubit square relates to a sanctified area. He does not say that was the measure of the walls of the First Temple. He could not do so because Solomon’s Temple was much smaller than the Hasmonean Temple and much smaller than the Herodian Temple. The 500-cubit

<sup>7</sup> This article was published, “[Maimonides – Heretic and Saint](#).”

<sup>8</sup> Other authors have written their understanding of the location of the crucifixion near the red heifer altar (directly east of the Gihon Temple) as well as the site of the burial and resurrection of Jesus nearby. Dr. Martin clearly thought the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea (Mark 15:43–47, helped by Nicodemus: John 19:38–42) was at the [Pater Nostra Church](#) on the Mount of Olives. John 19:41–42 says:

**“Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden; and in the garden a new sepulchre, wherein was never man yet laid. There laid they Jesus ...”**

<sup>9</sup> This 500 cubit measure is from *Mishnah* Middot 2.1. The size of cubits is debatable. Hillel chooses a larger measure of 1.722 feet per cubit x 500 = 861 feet square. Dr. Martin argued for a cubit of 1.5 feet per cubit x 500 cubits = 750 feet square.

measure was a ritual perimeter of the Temple, not a physical construction or boundary.

**Second**, Hillel neglects to cite the dimensions from an eyewitness to the Herodian Temple. He was a Jewish priest who grew up in Jerusalem and was present at its destruction in 70 AD. That eyewitness was Josephus, the Jewish historian who said the walls of the Herodian Temple were one *stade* square on each side. Hillel knows that Josephus wrote that Herod doubled the size of the Temple (*Wars of the Jews*, 1.401), yet he says the ritual dimension of 500 cubits square around the first Temple of Solomon remains the same, according to *Mishnah Middoth* 2.1. He is correct, but again, that 500 x 500-cubit area is not surrounded by walls.

Speaking of Herod's Temple, Josephus wrote: **“Such was the whole enclosure having a circumference of four stades, each side taking up the length of a stade”** (Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, 15:400, Thackeray translation, Loeb edition). While the length of a *stade* is debated, Dr. Martin chose the 600-foot length of one *stade*. Dr. Martin explains that Josephus is true and so is the *Mishnah Middoth* 2.1 measure:

**“It must be remembered that Josephus was an eyewitness of the Temple, Fort Antonia and all of Jerusalem. He dogmatically stated that the Temple was located on an elevated platform with four walls surrounding it that formed a perfect square. Each of the four Temple walls was exactly a *stade* (c. 600 feet) in length. Besides this (as I will show) the *Mishnah* a hundred years later said the Temple Mount was a perfect square of 500 cubits (c. 750 feet) on each of its four sides. The figures are not contradictory. They are supplemental to each other.**

**While the actual walls of the Temple were a perfect square of 600 feet on each side, there was another area surrounding the walls of the Temple (called the *Temple Mount* which had NO walls around it) that was also a perfect square of 750 feet on each side. The two areas with their different measurements were quite distinct from each other.**

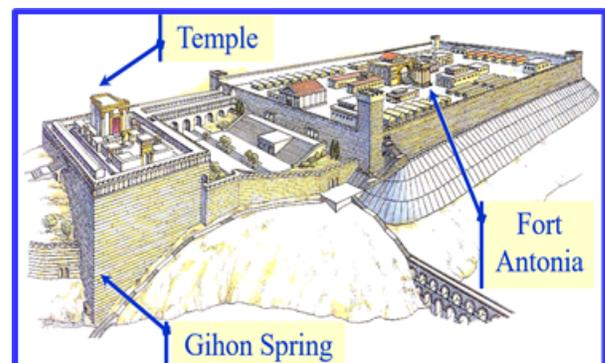
**These measurements provide us with two different dimensions depicting parameters that were not the same. The greater dimension describes a square area (750 feet on each side) that surrounded the square area of the walls of the Temple that Herod built around the Temple (600 feet on each side). The marginal area between the outer limits of the Temple Mount and the Temple walls were reckoned less holy to the Jewish authorities (I will show this in a later chapter).”**

- **Temples, “[Chapter 31, Descriptions of Fort Antonia and the Temple of Herod,](#)” 412–413**

I agree that Hillel is correct to understand that a 600 x 600 foot platform will not fit on top of the hill above the Gihon, and an 861-foot square platform is even more impossible. But Josephus does not say the Herodian Temple was on top of the hill. He says it extended from the center of the Tyropean valley to the center of the Kidron valley (both were dry most of every year) and encompassed the top of the hill. In other words the east wall of the Solomonic Temple was constructed to reach into the center of the Kidron Valley, the platform at the top included the threshing floor, and the west wall of the Temple descended into the center of the Tyropean Valley.

Another way to visualize the Herodian Temple is that it looked like a giant block tower set into and above the City of David. The east and west walls were retaining walls to hold in a huge quantity of fill of earth and stone until it rose to the height of the cut-down bedrock at the top of the City of David.<sup>10</sup>

Solomon's sanctuary was only 150 feet wide. The Temple was enlarged by Simon the Hasmonean. The Herodian Temple was twice the size of Simon's Temple. It was expanded to make a perfect square. The ritual 500 x 500 square cubit boundary (measured from the Holy of Holies



Dr. Martin's Illustration of the Herodian Temple/Antonia

<sup>10</sup> The original threshing floor area bought by David was cut to bedrock by Simon the Hasmonean when he purified and rebuilt the Temple of Zerubbabel after the people of Israel returned from captivity. See [“Chapter 25, A New Temple Had to be Built.”](#)

which moved with each expansion so it would stay centralized to the new dimensions) did not have walls. These were remarkable architectural achievements by Solomon, Simon, and King Herod. Yet with all that construction, they did not damage the Gihon Spring, source of water for the Temple and City of David.

[29:40] **During the Second Temple period we have very, very, very large earthen fills that stretch from the bottom of the valley below the City of David and right up to the ridge of the City of David and right up to the ridge of the City of David about 70 meters, 230 feet of earthen fills. Not just any earthen fills, [but] garbage. This is a very sophisticated method of disposing of garbage where you would bury it in layers, and I don't think they had any garbage underneath the Temple. Another problem is that these fills are unstable. If you were to put a Temple on those fills, they would collapse. So archaeologically, it just doesn't make sense.**

**Response.** Again, Dr. Martin accounted for this in *Temples* in “[Chapter 12, Ruins of The Temple in South-eastern Jerusalem](#).” Hillel confirms what Dr. Martin pointed out, all the stones were gone and Jesus’ prophecy of Matthew chapter 24 was fulfilled, that not one stone was left upon another for all Jerusalem and above all at the site of the Jewish Temples. It became a place of refuse.

**“Jerome (who lived in Bethlehem in the late fourth and early fifth centuries) recorded in his *Commentary on Isaiah 64:11*. [Jerome quoting Isaiah:]**

**‘Our holy and our beautiful house, where our fathers praised thee, is burned up with fire; and all our pleasant things are laid waste’:**

**and the Temple which earned reverence throughout the world has become the refuse dump of the new city whose founder [Hadrian] called it Aelia [that is, Hadrian called his new city Aelia Capitolina].**

**Hadrian converted the former Temple site into the city dump to humiliate the Jews. It remained in that condition until some Romans about a hundred and fifty years later saw the potential of the site for farming. They cleared the remaining ruined stones from the region and turned the area into a Roman farm. There was nothing left of the Temple when Eusebius described the site. To Eusebius, the former Sanctuary had become ‘like Sodom.’”**

• **Temples, quoting Moshe Gil, p.67, n.70**

That location by the Gihon continued to be a city dump long after Eusebius in the 4<sup>th</sup> century.

### ***Hillel's Issues and Evidence: Water on the Temple***

In addition to numerous biblical passages, there are six historical sources clearly showing there was a natural flowing spring inside the Herodian Temple sanctuary.<sup>11</sup> Yet Hillel says:

[30:29] **Now what about whole water issue. ... we have verses discussing the water and various vessels that were used and we have teachings from the *Mishnah* which talk about ‘in the chamber of the exiles there was a fixed cistern from where water was provided from the whole *Azarah*’ [Temple court]. So there is much discussion about cisterns which provided the water needed for the Temple. These were the officers that were in the Temple, and there is a whole list of various positions that were occupied in the Temple.**

Hillel shows a map by Charles Warren of the cisterns on the Haram, as if those were the only cisterns that brought water to the Temple to wash away the blood drained from the offerings. I agree that some Haram cisterns were used to flush the Temple waste but they did so at a Gihon Temple. Historical sources indicate cisterns were all around the Temple, as well as on the north, which conforms to a Gihon Temple.

The problem is, all cisterns for a Haram temple were all below ground level of the Temple. The Gihon Temple site offers a better solution — gravity. Water from cisterns on nearby hills (even from the area of

<sup>11</sup> The six are listed in my March 2016 Commentary, “[A New Fountain Quote](#)” as does Dr. Martin several places throughout *Temples*. This information reinforces Dr. Martin’s in “[Chapter 20, The Original Temple Over the Gihon Spring](#).”

Antonia) would flow down to a Gihon Temple through pipes, just as an eyewitness says from around 250 BC:

**“There are moreover wonderful and indescribable cisterns underground ... at a distance of five furlongs all round the site of the Temple, and each of them has countless pipes so that the different streams converge together.”**

• *The Letter of Aristeas (c. 250 BC), Charles’ translation, 1913, p. 89*

That sounds like a great system. Aristeas wrote about 230 years before King Herod’s Temple expansion in 20 BC. He is not referring to the Haram-Antonia complex. For a Temple on the Haram, water from every cistern would need to be handled to wash the blood from where the offerings were killed and cut up.

### ***The Issue of Living Water and a Spring in the Temple***

Hillel claims that an aqueduct from Etam south of Jerusalem brought water to the Temple.<sup>12</sup> In our understanding such an aqueduct may indeed have filled the cisterns to Fort Antonia, as rain drained to Antonia cisterns. The problem is that no aqueduct existed before the time of the Hasmonean period. The question must be asked, how did Solomon, 800 years before the Hasmonean period get “living water” to the Temple? Jeremiah is clear that cistern water does not qualify as “living water” or able to be used for ritual impurity:

**“For my people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water.”**

• *Jeremiah 2:13*

Cistern water was fine for flushing waste, but it was not “living water” useable for ritual purification.<sup>13</sup> Spring water was required for the purification cleansing.<sup>14</sup> Read Jeremiah 17:13 (YHWH identifies Himself and His presence with “living waters”) and Zechariah 13:1 and 14:8. Jesus taught about the cleansing effect of “living water” from God (John 4:10–11, 14, 7:38, as well as Revelation 21:6, 22:1, 17).

### ***Hillel’s Issues and Evidence: Could the “temple mount” be Fort Antonia?***

[35:35] **Now why is the “temple mount” not Antonia? From what I have gathered from these theories there is a very elementary and a little bit of an embarrassing stake here of just noticing coincidences and paying too much attention to the coincidences. So the claim is that the Antonia Fortress, has to be the “temple mount” because the “temple mount” [Antonia] is sort of rectangular and Roman castra or castrum [singular] were rectangular or square or whatnot and it looks exactly the same. It does not look exactly the same.**

<sup>12</sup> See the 2014 retrospective archaeological study by David Amit and Shimon Gibson, “[Water to Jerusalem: the Route and Date of the Upper and Lower Level Aqueducts](#).” Amit and Gibson conclude that no aqueducts to Jerusalem from the south are prior to the Hasmonean period usually denoted as between 164 to 37 BC. They also express uncertainty whether some aqueducts are Hasmonean or Roman. If Roman, then one could be the aqueduct that Pontius Pilate ordered constructed for the good of the city.

Water requirements were expanding because the population was growing and the Temple was using too much of the city’s water for offerings during the feasts of the Jews. Josephus says in *Antiquities of the Jews* 18:60-61, Feldman translation, Loeb Edition:

**“He [Pilate] spent money from the sacred treasury in the construction of the aqueduct to bring water into Jerusalem, intercepting the source of the stream at a distance of 200 furlongs [about 23 miles]. The Jews did not acquiesce in the operations that this involved; and tens of thousands of men assembled and cried out against him, bidding him relinquish his promotion of such designs. Some too even hurled insults and abuse ...”**

Pilate’s troops attacked the people and many were slain, *Wars of the Jews* 2.175.

<sup>13</sup> Aristeas wrote of a fountain inside the Temple. So did first century AD Roman historian Tacitus in his *History*, Book 5, para.12:

**“The Temple resembled a citadel, and had its own walls, which were more laboriously constructed than the others [within Jerusalem]. Even the colonnades with which it was surrounded formed an admirable outward work. It [the Temple] contained an inexhaustible spring.”**

<sup>14</sup> See George Buchanan, “[Running Water at the Temple of Zion](#),” and Dr. Martin, “[Water Management in Herod’s Temple](#).”

**Response.** No one says they look the same,<sup>15</sup> but all who hold to the Gihon Temple evidence point out likenesses, especially similarities to Roman permanent fortresses. Critics often make this mistake. Hillel presents a typical design of a Roman camp when in the field. Permanent Roman fortresses were larger with more defensive strength than Roman field camps. A permanent fortress was more rectangular; some had towers. Also, 1<sup>st</sup> century permanent Roman fortresses differed from later permanent forts.

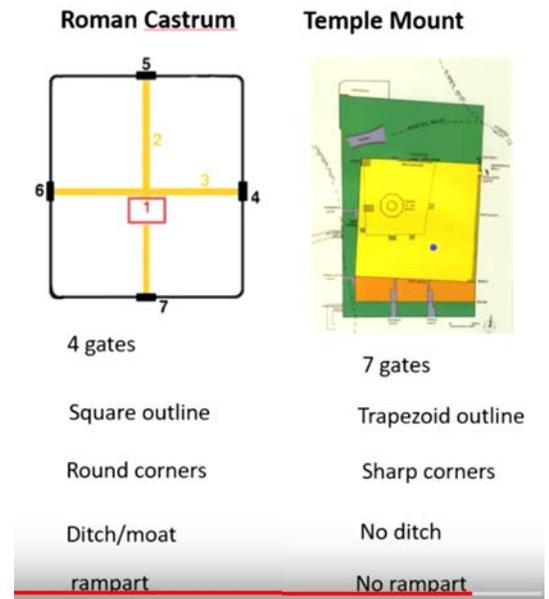
Remember, the Haram-Antonia complex “... was the work of King Herod and a crowning exhibition of the innate grandeur of his genius” (Josephus, *Wars of the Jews* 5.238, Thackaray translation, Loeb edition). Herod, a master builder expanded the Hasmonean fortress called the Baris, accounting for natural features to enhance the defense of his fortress. This is why the Haram-Antonia is almost a trapezoid and not a rectangle.

Herod put elements of the strongest Roman defensive features of the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD into the construction of the fortress, but Herod built to his own specifications and needs relative to his goal to protect the Temple. After all, Rome did not build the structure. Herod’s Haram-Antonia had four towers (like permanent Roman fortresses) with the tallest being at the southeast corner for visibility into the Temple to the south over the Gihon. The corners were square and not rounded like other permanent Roman fortresses.

According to Josephus, Fortress Antonia “commanded a view of the whole area of the temple. ... For if the temple lay as a fortress over the city, Antonia dominated the Temple,” and Antonia “formed on the north the only obstruction to the view of the temple.” (Josephus, *Wars of the Jews* 5.242, 245, 246). Antonia covered the entire width of the north side of the Temple, separated by a 600-foot space that held two porticos or colonnades, or bridges as we would call them today. When approaching Jerusalem from the north, you could not see the Temple because it was obstructed by Antonia, yet Hillel denies that fact. That was the space where much of the teaching took place in the Temple and where Paul spoke to the people when he was arrested.



Deva Victrix, Chester, England, Permanent Roman Fort 1<sup>st</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> century AD — with stone walls and towers



Hillel Slide, Roman Fort-Antonia Comparison

[37:25] **There is a claim that where are you going to house 10,000 legionnaires? Where are you going to house them? Yes, there was a very large military force in Jerusalem called the 10<sup>th</sup> Roman Legion Fretensis which was a very powerful military force in those days, that was in Jerusalem. But there is only one little problem. They were not there before the destruction. If they were there before the destruction the rebellion would have been quelled in 66 [AD]. There would have been no rebellion.**

**The Jews of Jerusalem had no chance against 10,000 Roman soldiers inside the so-called Antonia Fortress. Another very important thing to say is that the Antonia Fortress was not built as a Roman fort. That wasn't in the specs [meaning "specifications"]. It was built as a fortress originally by the Hasmoneans in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BCE and then Herod expanded it or refurbished it. It was built specifically as a tower to guard the Temple. It wasn't built as a Roman fort. Yes, there were Roman forces inside that structure but it wasn't built as a Roman fortress.**

<sup>15</sup> The main Roman fort at Masada is not a rectangle but a trapezoid to take advantage of geographic defense benefits.

By the way the historically, archaeologically, the number of Roman soldiers, who by the way weren't, let's call them, full-blown legionaries, they were more like auxiliary forces. They were between 400 and 1,000 soldiers in Jerusalem. That was the number that the archaeologists know today, and there was no legion, therefore we don't need to worry about housing for 10,000 soldiers.

Here is an indication from Josephus, this is from the rebellion, when the Jews rebelled against the Romans. He talks about the fact that the rebels, the zealots, made an assault against Antonia and captured it in two days. So it is a little bit hard thought to imagine 10,000 soldiers being conquered by a few crazy Jews in two days. Again, we are talking about the most heavily armed, well-trained force in the ancient world.

**Response.** The “small structure tradition” considers Fort Antonia unable to house a full legion. Roman troops did not take over security for Jerusalem, including Antonia, until 6 AD. For information as to how many troops Antonia was built to house, see Dr. Martin's discussion in “[Chapter 3, The Largeness of Fort Antonia](#).” Read what Josephus said about the capacity of Antonia.

[39:40] Another issue is the fact that the Antonia Fortress was destroyed. The foundations were dug up and we have here the quote from Josephus, an entire day's worth for the soldiers to dig up the foundations of Antonia and in seven days' time they have overthrown the foundations of Antonia and they used it as a location from which they breached into the Temple Mount.

The structures in the north wall of Antonia were taken down to the ground level of the platform, that meant the towers and the stones of the north wall. It does not say all walls.

[40:05] Another point ... an archaeological fact, there is a quote from Josephus, which indicates that, and you can also see in the picture, that the Temple Mount wasn't built in a single day. This was a project that took years. Again, we are talking about the expansion which was planned by King Herod the Great, but we have historical indications and archaeological indications that it was not completed in Herod's day.

[40:37] What I want to show you now is another indication that the Antonia cannot be the Temple Mount. Right underneath Robinson's Arch, we are doing a lot of Robinson's Arch today, they dug straight to the foundations of the “temple mount.” So what you see here [see the video at 40:50] is the very lowest course of the “temple mount” resting upon bedrock in the southwestern corner. Part of what you see there are very large pavers [paving stones?] which are sealed below the foundations of the “temple mount.” And one thing that we have to talk about historically is the project of expanding the “temple mount” was a very, very large project, and part of this project required ... basically to confiscate structures that were in the area. So the government had to do some land grabbing.



**Mikveh and Coins under Southwest Cornerstones of Haram**

And what we see here is what was underneath the foundation of the “temple mount” in this location, and we have steps leading down, and this is a *mikveh*, this is a ritual bath which was again underneath the foundations of the “temple mount” and the pottery is 1<sup>st</sup> century pottery and the latest coin dates to 17 to 18 [AD] and it can't be any earlier than this latest coin, which is way after King Herod's reign. We are talking about the 1<sup>st</sup> century, King Herod died in 4 BCE, so this cannot be the Antonia.

Why can't this be the Antonia? Because why is Antonia named Antonia? It was named after Herod's boss basically who was Mark Antony. Mark Antony was out of the picture in the year 31 BCE. He was defeated by Augustus in the Actium battle, and therefore it could not have been named after Antonia because Herod would have found himself with one less head. So the “temple mount” is the “temple mount” after all.

[42:54] **We are going to look at some very basic archaeological evidence. The first thing to keep in mind, these are from Josephus, is we have historical sources which tell a lot about the “temple mount” and the only structure in Jerusalem that matches the historical sources is the structure known as the “temple mount.”**

**Response.** That is not the case. Hillel shows several artist renderings that incorporate Josephus’ descriptions of the Temple superimposed on the “temple mount” structure as it exists today. Yet the descriptions of Josephus fit better when applied to the Gihon Temple and Antonia, including the two bridges between them, which Josephus described in detail. (These bridges are ignored by Hillel and critics of the Gihon Temple/Antonia complex.) Read *Temples* and judge for yourself. Dr. Martin does the same with his pictorial renderings of the Temple and Antonia, as do other authors.<sup>16</sup>

[44:24] **Here we see the famous “seam” in the southern and southeastern part of the Temple Mount, note the clear break in the building the masonry on the right is the Hasmonean period and to the left is Herodian masonry. ...**

The “seam” is the line of stones in the center of this picture. However, contrary to Hillel, it is easy to see that the Herodian stones to the left are less carefully placed than the stones to the right. The seam as well as, the *mikveh* and the coin discovery by Eli Shukron are explained in my December 2011 Commentary, “[New Finds in Jerusalem](#)” where I show they fit the Haram-Antonia scenario best.



### ***The Trumpet Stone Inscription***

This inscription is often given as absolute proof that the Temple was the location of where this artifact was found. Hillel gives background:

[53:24] **And the smoking gun which is the “Trumpeting” SIGN [he then speaks Hebrew, the inscription in Hebrew, but he does not say it in English] which is something we know historically and we know from the rabbinical sources that they would blow the trumpet and in other times, you can see the quote from Josephus ...”**

After he says “Josephus” he reads the passage from Thackeray’s translation of *Jewish Wars*. Note:

Hillel’s Quote, <i>Jewish Wars</i> 4.582	Complete Quote in Context, <i>Jewish Wars</i> 4.582
<p>[Hillel begins his quote here]</p> <p><b>“... the point where it was the custom for one of the priests to stand and to give notice, by sound of trumpet, in the afternoon of the approach and on the following evening of the close, of every seventh day ...”</b></p>	<p><b><i>“The last [tower] was erected above the roof of the priests’ chambers,<sup>17</sup> at the point where it was the custom for one of the priests to stand and to give notice, by sound of trumpet, in the afternoon of the approach and on the following evening of the close, of every seventh day, announcing to the people the respective hours for ceasing work and for resuming their labours.”</i></b></p>

<sup>16</sup> The Josephus description of Antonia fits perfectly with the Haram as Antonia (and not the “temple mount”). For a detailed account of the problems, see the article by Marilyn Sams, “[How the Siege of Titus Locates the Temple Mount in the City of David.](#)” Her excellent book *The Jerusalem Temple Mount Myth* is available for purchase.

<sup>17</sup> Thackeray has a footnote after the word “chambers” that were in the Temple: **“Small chambers, for the use of the priests and storage of utensils, ranged in stories around three sides of the inner court.”**

Hillel's quote is incomplete. In his November 11 video he does not translate to English what the trumpet stone inscription says, but he did in the earlier November 7, 2018<sup>18</sup> video — and he did so accurately:

[Nov. 7, 2018: 49:55 to 50:25] **This is the “smoking gun” which was found again underneath the southern corner of the “temple mount” with a Hebrew inscription which reads** [quoting Hebrew, then Hillel translates to English:] **“To the house of trumpeting.”**

I am sure you caught that. The inscription does not say “This is the house [or the place] of Trumpeting,” it says **“TO the house of trumpeting.”** The inscription is indeed a “sign” as Hillel says; it points to a place other than where the sign was located. Suffice to say it fits the Gihon Temple and Antonia scenario very well.

The Trumpet Stone inscription directs the reader of the inscription **from Antonia to the Gihon Temple.** Construction of both structures was begun by Herod for the Jews with not anticipating the Romans would take control in the future. Access to the Temple from Antonia was by a walkway across one of the two bridges Josephus describes in detail, just feet away from the supposed place of the inscription. Josephus identifies where the trumpeting was done — in the Temple at an open chamber that Josephus knew well.

### *Chaim Richman's Presentation*

Chaim Richman spoke after his son on November 7, 2018. He began speaking about the importance of the Temple Mount. I quote at length parts of his 54-minute talk. I format the text differently for efficiency:

[2:55] The concept of the Holy Temple is something that is applicable and important for all mankind, not only for Israel, because according to every prophet of the Bible of Israel, the Holy Temple is about the restoration of God's honor, as well as the spiritual rectification man's relationship with God, and indeed the hope of mankind. It all depends on the Holy Temple. And really the prophets tell us that the hope of the world is dependent on the Holy Temple.

Well no, the hope of the world is in Christ. Continuing on, he reads Isaiah 2:2–4 and comments:

[4:25] This is very deep, why the Holy Temple is the hope of the world. Why is that? It goes back to the whole concept of the purpose of creation, why is it the Temple that unifies mankind? We learn, we study, that the purpose of creation was that God sought an abode in this world.

No, that is not the purpose of creation, but let's go on. Read the foregoing to learn **what he thinks of you.**

[6:00] The building of the Temple and the spiritual rectification that it brings about is also very much connected to the goal of human existence. ... What is the goal of human existence? It is to reveal God's presence in this world, because His presence is concealed on purpose, because we are supposed to look for him, to reveal His presence, to connect to Him in everything that we do, to make that presence known to other people, and most importantly, the role of man is to constantly be presented with opportunities to choose between right and wrong.

[7:32] What happens in the Holy Temple is that we are called upon to define and to refine our own humanity. It is an experience that goes on in the Holy Temple. What goes on there is designed to empower a person to strive to become a better person, and really, I would need 2,000 years to really talk about what it is that goes on in the Temple. [He gives examples.]

[8:28] We are all the common descendants of Adam. We are taught that Adam himself was created from the place of the altar in the Holy Temple. So everything revolves around the Temple. All of human existence really is anchored in the cycle of time. ...

[12:06] This is not some cult about architecture. It is not about a physical building. It is about a concept. That is what the Holy Temple is all about. It is about deepening and developing our understanding of our relationship with God in an intimate way, and how real that is, because the presence of God is concealed in this world. One of the ideas about the Holy Temple is that every person is able to come there and be refreshed and be

<sup>18</sup> Hillel's presentation from November 7 video, "[Hillel Richman: The True Location of the Temple Mount](#)," lacks the embedded illustrations, but is otherwise almost identical to the November 11 presentation.

renewed and engage in this direct unfolding revelation of just how close we really are to God at all times.

[17:18] Really, the fate of mankind hinges upon that place [the Temple]. So the idea is, and Hillel mentioned, you know, and I personally in the Temple Institute I must be receiving 20, 30 emails a week about these theories. These theories about the Temple Mount is really somewhere else, that the Holy Temple is located somewhere else, to the extent that I could say it is an attack, you know. The location of the Holy Temple is under attack. I feel there is a very direct connection between this very tangible and very concrete issue, the location of the Temple, as simple as it would seem, and the connection between this and the spiritual aspect and significance in dimensions that we are discussing.

The bottom line is that we are living in a world of fake news. Everybody knows that. We are always talking about fake news. To be perfectly frank, and you know it's a bold step to be addressing this issue frontally, to be confronting it, but the bottom line is, you know it's a lie. It's a lie. It's a lie to say that the Temple Mount is anywhere else, the Temple was located anywhere else than its true location.

And it is the mother of all fake news. Again, I am just calling it as it is. If I am defending the honor of the God of Israel, I don't have to be polite, right? That is what I am trying to say. So, people though, are very invested in these other theories. People have been very angry. They say, can't you consider it? Can't you keep an open mind? And the reason that I cannot keep an open mind is because it's the wrong place and also, doesn't it matter what God says?

You know, if there's any other place, is simply wrong, but I want you to open up your heart in the deepest way and understand on a deep level what is really going on here. Why is it that this falsehood is becoming so popular? It is really, really, being taken over in certain quarters and being touted as a way that the Temple could be built that much quicker, because after all, if you don't have to disturb any of the current Islamic structures, or something like that, then we could build it that much quicker.

This is all based on incredible naivety of the geopolitical reality of what is really going on in Israel. In any event, you know, the presentation that my son [Hillel] gave you was called "The True Location of the Temple Mount." And, if you put those words into YouTube, you'll get dozens of videos purporting that other places are the true locations, which is why he chose that title. It is spreading and its popularity is growing and I want to know why that is. And the answer is because we are locked in a struggle for the truth at this particular time.

You know that whenever something is good, whenever something is godly and true, it is always confronted by opposition. These attempts are basically, and again ... I am just going to be direct, right? These are attempts to unseat God, to obscure, to muddy, to stop the truth of what really is going on. Why? Precisely because the temple mount is the Temple Mount, and that is why it is being contested because falsehood always attacks the truth.

Furthermore, again, just to be totally honest with you, this is another ploy to delegitimize Israel and to erode her standing and sovereignty. It is a very idiosyncratic Jewish topic. It takes a bit of arrogance to purport that we don't know where the Temple is, right? Aside from the fact that it is based on the denial of biblical truth, of Jewish history, of archaeological evidence.

But where is it really coming from? This is a very, very fascinating idea that some of you may be aware of. The Bible tells us that the entire land of Israel is promised to the children of Israel, and that's a fact. But there are three places where the Bible actually records that they were purchased. The whole land was promised — okay. But there is a deed of sale that the Torah bothers to record about 3 places, literally to say, or as if to say that if someone would come along and challenge our sovereignty on these places, we can actually prove it, right?

What are those three places, in chronological order? We just read about it in the Torah portion, [1] the Tomb of the Patriarch in Hebron, right, which Abraham purchased from the Hittite. [2] The tomb of Joseph in Shechem in Nablus, and of course, [3] Mount Moriah, the threshing floor of the Jebusite which King David purchased. Ironically, these three places are the only places that I could actually show you a deed of sale, and they are the three places that have come to symbolize, have come to epitomize all the contention over sovereignty in the land of Israel. ...

So this is another level of this phenomenon that we see. Again, I like to be honest and direct. I will tell you even better what this really is: The contention that the Temple Mount is not where it is, is another form of what

we call “replacement theology.” Honestly, that is all it is. It is put forward by people that have an agenda. So the agenda might be writing a book, it might be fame, it might be fortune, or it might be their own theological motivation, but like they say, that you can fool some of the people some of the time, but you can’t pull one over on God.

This is an extremely important issue because there is a certain spirit that is motivating these hucksters. Yes, hucksters, charlatans, who actually think they can pull it over on Him, right? Again, we are learning in these Torah portions of Genesis, other generations who thought that they could fool God, like the generations of the flood, of the builders of the tower [of Babel], and the citizens of Sodom, and Nimrod, and a long list of people throughout history who think that they can pull one over on Him [God].

Then he speaks about the Jewish calendar month of Kislev and Hanukkuh.

[27:57] The statement that we are making when we light the Hanukkah candles is that we will not allow any usurper to come between our nation and God as they attempted to do. And of course, every power that ever attempted to do that is no longer here. They are in the dustbin of history.

So it is not a popular position, our position, because these ideas are becoming so entrenched in a popularized mentality, but I think, at least I would like to address them for what they are. They are unlearned cheap attempts to de-Judaize the Temple Mount, to delegitimize the Jewish people. But the fate of the world is what really hangs in the balance. All of the denials including those of the United Nations, they are basically attempts to unseat God from His land and from His city. Again, the question really is why is this going on right now?

Rabbi Richman goes on to state the activities of Temple Institute, including the breeding of a red heifer needed to reinstate purity.

[30:43] In the realm of holiness and the realm of progress of spiritual revolution there is always going to be an antagonist. There is always going to be an opposition, which is exactly what we are seeing now. The subject matter is too important for us to remain silent because indeed the future of the world is totally dependent upon the clarification of this place, the place where God will make His presence known. [He then quotes Ezekiel 37:25–28]

This verse and many others are indicating to us that the Temple is what really focuses all of humanity together in this unparalleled unity and harmony and understanding, the divine origin of life, the purpose of life and the purpose of human existence together really to know God in all of our ways, and to reveal that presence in the world. So this is our prayer, our blessing, our hope, that unites us. I am very thankful to all of you for being here tonight. ...<sup>19</sup>

## Conclusion

Those who criticize a Gihon Temples site in the City of David all accept that the Temples were located somewhere on the Haram esh-Sharif. But there are eleven sites spoken of by Haram enthusiasts, four old and seven modern theories are presented in “[Chapter 8: Many Modern Sites for the Temples in Jerusalem](#)” (Two other sites have come forth since Dr. Martin wrote *Temples*.) So, even the “experts” disagree among themselves as to where the Jewish Temples were on the Haram. The most accepted theory is that it was under the Dome of the Rock. Their excuse is that archaeologists have not been allowed to “get up there” to examine which Haram theory is correct. In the meantime the controversy continues.

As I mentioned at the beginning Dr. Martin originally thought the Holy of Holies was at the Dome of the Spirits until he grew in grace and knowledge (2 Peter 3:18), as I was recently reminded. He succeeded in many areas of increasing knowledge. That included sorting through biblical and historical records that form a great body of evidence to demonstrate the location of the Temple above the Gihon in the City of David.

David Sielaff, February 2019

<sup>19</sup> [36:15–37:30] During questions, Chaim Richman answered a question of where the Ark of the Covenant is located. He answered it is not a secret; it is underneath the Temple Mount in a chamber made by Solomon and placed there by Josiah before the exile. This comes from Jewish tradition and a scriptural allusion. I have no evidence to believe this information. It certainly cannot be underneath the wrong Temple location. I doubt it is under the Gihon site either. Read 2 Maccabees 2:1–7.