

Locating Solomon's Temple using only the Bible as the source of information

Introduction to the topography of ancient Jerusalem

We don't have any photographs from the first century AD to show where the temple stood. No one can do a time travel back to that period and come back to tell for sure where the temple stood. But starting from King David's time we can pick verses from the Bible to which provide vital clues not just the location but the exact of the location of the temple. We have more verses in the Bible to describe the Jerusalem in King David's time than about the Jerusalem of Jesus' time. In fact the New Testament has very little about the temple, although the temple was existing when the gospels were written. New Testament authors probably never placed much importance on the temple after Jesus gave them the famous prophecy that the entire temple will be destroyed not leaving one stone upon another. Using all the evidences from the Bible, we can draw the broad contours of the location of the ancient Jewish temple and finally see that it clearly points out to one particular place!

Even before starting this analysis, let me ask two questions which will put other theories such as the temple in the city of David to trash. If the temple was in the city of David and the entire Temple Mount was fort Antonia, what business had the crusaders to dig under a Roman fortress? We know from history that they were seeking something valuable from the temple of God. They must have dug up the entire city of David then instead of the Temple Mount. Secondly, if the temple was in the city of David, there will be no war or conflict with the Muslims and the Jewish temple can be peacefully built even now. But if it were so, what do we do with the prophecies mentioned in Ezekiel chapters 38 and 39 about the third world war which needs to be fulfilled? There are scores of other prophecies waiting to happen such as Damascus waiting to be overthrown in one night. All such prophecies will never be fulfilled making the word of God a lie. That can never happen. All prophecies must be fulfilled and hence a war is inevitable as per the Bible although no one wants a war.

We have 3 instances of the temple and locating any one will be sufficient to establish the location of the temple as we believe all 3 temples stood at the same location. In this approach, we will also use clues from across different temples to investigate the location of the temple. One scripture portion mentions clearly that all temples stood on the same location. As the KJV is not clear, I have quoted other versions of the Bible.

Ezra 5: 15 The king instructed him to return the cups to their place in Jerusalem and to rebuild the Temple of God there on its original site. (New Living Translation)

Ezra 5: 15 And he said to him, 'Take these articles; go, carry them to the temple site that is in Jerusalem, and let the house of God be rebuilt on its former site.' (New King James Version)

From the descriptions given in the Bible, we can draw the topographical map of Jerusalem with respect to well-known unchangeable landmarks such as the Gihon spring, Hezekiah's water

tunnel, pool of Siloam etc. Taking this approach will give us the real or the natural topography of ancient Jerusalem before layers were built upon the ruins. Currently, we have Jerusalem as a city which has many layers and the earliest or the deepest layer dating back to 10th century BC. But reading the verses from the scriptures will provide us the topography of the earliest known Jerusalem. This will help us to approximate the location of the temple. We will use scriptures from different contexts to provide vital clues which can be pieced together to get the bird's eye view of where the temple stood.

We will also need to draw some distinctions between the places Mount Moriah, Ophel and the city of David. These three places are distinctly mentioned in the scriptures and cannot be construed as one and the same place. Even within the precincts of ancient Jerusalem, these places are used differently. Anyone reading the Bible, will not say that these places are one and the same. The city of David was also called the fort Zion. We must not confuse Zion to be the place of the temple taking verses like God dwells in Zion. If we do so, we will be lost in direction. Because there are many figurative statements in the Bible, we must learn to differentiate between such figurative statements and real statements. It must also be noted that we must respect the law of inerrancy of the word of God. If we try to argue against the scripture, on the accuracy of the facts mentioned therein, then we don't have a base to start with. What best source is available to us than the writings from the era of the first millennium BC?

Topography of ancient Jerusalem

Geographically, Mount Moriah was the highest hill which continued to the south as the Ophel. The Ophel was at a lower elevation than Moriah. The Ophel continued further south to the city of David from where it all began. The city of David was the lowest of the three. And the Kidron valley was at a still lower elevation than the city of David. On the sides of the slope of the ridge of the city of David was the Gihon spring. Although this topography is exactly what we see today, we can also affirm it from the scriptures. We will take one by one.

1. Gihon spring was lower than the city of David

When King David was old, he ordered his son Solomon to be crowned as the next king. The descriptions that we read in that place gives us this firm clue. Note that Solomon was only crowned at Gihon spring but his palace or the temple was not there. Some argue that Solomon was crowned at the temple which was upon the Gihon spring. There is no scriptural evidence for such a thing. The below conversation is taking place in 1 Kings chapter 1. You can read the full chapter for yourself to get the full context.

*1 Kings 1: 33 The king also said unto them, Take with you the servants of your lord, and cause Solomon my son to ride upon mine own mule, and bring him **down** to Gihon:*

Note that King David's palace was in the city of David. Sitting in his palace, David commands prophet Nathan and Zadok the priest to take Solomon "down" to the Gihon spring and anoint

him king over Israel. After the coronation he was to come “up” and sit on David’s throne which was in David’s palace. We read about that in the succeeding verses.

*1 Kings 1: 33 Then ye shall **come up** after him, that he may come and sit upon my throne; for he shall be king in my stead: and I have appointed him to be ruler over Israel and over Juddah.*

Following this command, David’s servants anointed Solomon as the king of Israel and they took him “down” to the Gihon spring and brought him “up” to David’s palace.

*1 Kings 1: 38 to 40 So Zadok the priest, and Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and the Cherethites, and the Pelethites, **went down**, and caused Solomon to ride upon king David's mule, **and brought him to Gihon**.*

And Zadok the priest took an horn of oil out of the tabernacle, and anointed Solomon. And they blew the trumpet; and all the people said, God save king Solomon.

*And all the people **came up after him**, and the people piped with pipes, and rejoiced with great joy, so that the earth rent with the sound of them.*

The above passages clearly picture us that the palace of David in the city of David was at a higher level than the Gihon.

2. Solomon’s palace for his wife was outside the city of David at a higher level (at Ophel)

King Solomon built a palace for his wife, the daughter of Pharaoh at Ophel. We don’t read of any direct scripture which tells us where Solomon built his own palace but we have an indirect reference placing it at Ophel. We are not sure if Solomon’s palace was the same as his wife’s or his wife’s palace was an extension of his own palace. The Bible tells us that Solomon built a house for his wife outside the city of David and at a higher elevation. Now this verse gives us much indication as to the topography of the city of David. Solomon had no other option to expand the city than the northerly direction. This was because the western, eastern and the southern sides of the city of David was surrounded by deep valleys. The Tyropoeon Valley curves down towards the south and meets the Kidron valley at the southern tip of the city of David. Since these natural features of ancient Jerusalem are well known to everyone, there is no need to explain the northerly expansion of the city of David.

Therefore the only possible place where Solomon could have built a house for his wife must be at Ophel although we don’t have a direct scripture mentioning it.

*2 Chronicles 8: 11 And Solomon brought **up the daughter of Pharaoh out of the city of David** unto the house that he had built for her: for he said, My wife shall not dwell in the house of David king of Israel, because the places are holy, whereunto the ark of the LORD hath come.*

Now how far from the city of David and how much higher than the city of David is not clear from this verse. But that piece will fit in after we have some more links fitting in. For now, we know that the palace of Solomon’s wife was at a higher level than the city of David. The latter part of the above verse mentions that Solomon considered the house of David as holy because the ark

of the Lord was kept there for some period. This does not mean that the temple was in the city of David. We know that David brought the ark to the city of David, made a tent for it near his palace and kept the ark there among curtains. It is this point that Solomon mentions here.

3. Temple was at a higher level than the city of David

*2 Chronicles 5: 2 Then Solomon assembled the elders of Israel, and all the heads of the tribes, the chief of the fathers of the children of Israel, to Jerusalem, to bring **up** the ark of the covenant of the LORD out of the city of David, which is Zion.*

Here we clearly see that the ark which was kept in David's palace in the city of David was brought into the temple for dedication. How do we know this? Verse 1 tells us that Solomon finished building the temple and brought all things into the house of the Lord. After this verse, we have the above verse which mentions that the ark was also brought into the temple.

2 Chronicles 5: 1 Thus all the work that Solomon made for the house of the LORD was finished: and Solomon brought in all the things that David his father had dedicated; and the silver, and the gold, and all the instruments, put he among the treasures of the house of God.

Now, this is a direct verse which some try to interpret in a twisted way. They try to argue that the temple was in the city of David and the ark was just taken out for a procession. We cannot and must not take such assumed meanings. This is where people are insincere to the scriptures because scripture is very clear in telling us that the temple was not in the city of David. We must not twist the scriptures to suit our own models. One must not cut the feet in order to fit into the shoe. Only the shoe must be modified as per the feet. Similarly, we can never ever change the word of God and its meaning. The word of God never contradicts itself. If we don't understand, we must only look for further clues to make our understanding complete.

So, clearly the temple was at a higher level than the city of David. Now we don't know how high the temple was from the city of David. The same problem that we faced earlier about how high Solomon's wife's palace was from the city of David. Another verse connects magically to provide the answer from an unexpected source.

4. Solomon's palace was lower than the temple

*2 Chronicles 9: 4 And the meat of his table, and the sitting of his servants, and the attendance of his ministers, and their apparel; his cupbearers also, and their apparel; **and his ascent by which he went up into the house of the LORD**; there was no more spirit in her.*

These are the descriptions when the famous queen of Sheba met Solomon at his palace. We read about the ascent by which he went "up" to the house of the Lord. This is mentioned as stairway in International Standard Version. Therefore the temple must be at a higher level than Solomon's palace. Now this verse settles the matter of "how far". From the reference 3 we understood that the temple was at a higher level than the city of David. From this reference we understand that

there must be Solomon's palace between the city of David and the temple. What best place other than Ophel to locate Solomon's palace?

Another evidence of the king's palace and the temple to be in close vicinity can be seen from the account of Athaliah's murder. We read about the coronation of King Joash in 2 Kings chapter 11. We read how Joash was hid in the temple of the Lord for 6 years. The coronation was taking place inside the temple premises, but Athaliah heard the noise from her palace. This must corroborate further evidence that the palace and temple were attached by close quarters although in this reference no mention of altitude is given.

1 Kings 11: 12 And he brought forth the king's son, and put the crown on him, and gave him the testimony; and they made him king, and anointed him; and they clapped their hands, and said, God save the king.

1 Kings 11: 13 And when Athaliah heard the noise of the guard and of the people, she came to the people into the temple of the LORD.

1 Kings 11: 14 And when she looked, behold, the king stood by a pillar, as the manner was, and the princes and the trumpeters by the king, and all the people of the land rejoiced, and blew with trumpets: and Athaliah rent her clothes, and cried, Treason, Treason.

5. There was a castle higher than the level of the temple (Fort Antonia)

Acts 21: 30 And all the city was moved, and the people ran together: and they took Paul, and drew him out of the temple: and forthwith the doors were shut.

Acts 21: 31 And as they went about to kill him, tidings came unto the chief captain of the band, that all Jerusalem was in an uproar.

Acts 21: 32 Who immediately took soldiers and centurions, and ran down unto them: and when they saw the chief captain and the soldiers, they left beating of Paul.

Acts 21: 33 Then the chief captain came near, and took him, and commanded him to be bound with two chains; and demanded who he was, and what he had done.

Acts 21: 34 And some cried one thing, some another, among the multitude: and when he could not know the certainty for the tumult, he commanded him to be carried into the castle.

Acts 21: 35 And when he came upon the stairs, so it was, that he was borne of the soldiers for the violence of the people.

Here, we read about an incident in the New Testament in the days of Paul. We see Paul being cast out of the temple and beaten by the Jews who thought that he had brought a Greek person into the temple of God. When the chief captain of the band heard that the city was in uproar he came "down" with others and stopped the killing of Paul. Then we see Paul was taken into a castle which is Fort Antonia that we know from the history. The fort was connected to the temple through stairs and this was the stairs by which the chief captain came down with the soldiers.

Therefore completing our picture of the topography, this is what we get. - **A big interconnected chain of buildings:** This makes our job easier in locating the temple. Because all the verses must fit into the chain and this poses restrictions in placing this entire chain on the map. We don't have any direct verse mentioning that Kidron valley was the lowest point among all these places, but we don't need proof of that. Because even today, we have the Kidron valley as the lowest point. This is the chain that we got from the 5 references that we have referred above. We will add Kidron valley also. The places are ranked in the ascending order of elevation.

Kidron Valley → Gihon Spring → King David's palace in the city of David → Solomon's palace in Ophel → Temple of the Lord → Fort Antonia

A word of advice to all authors who are out in the field each trying to locate the Temple with their own revelation and understanding: Know that the temple is connected with the Fort Antonia in the north and Solomon's palace in the south. So when you attempt to place the temple, don't look for the clues of the temple alone. Look whether the existing clues on the fort Antonia and the Solomon's temple also fit in your model. Taking a partisan view will drive you to place the temple at a completely wrong location.

If you start placing each block starting with the Kidron Valley, it is easy to see that our interconnected building chain easily places the temple beyond the Ophel. We will draw a picture of the topography and stop here and look at other evidences. We will now look at some evidences which tells us why the temple cannot be at the Ophel and at the city of David.

Why the temple cannot be at Ophel

Ophel was a place that was not built until Solomon's time. Because Solomon expanded the city of David to its north, the Ophel was developed as a living quarters. We also saw already that Solomon's palace had to be in the Ophel. We also saw that Solomon's wife's palace had to be in the Ophel. Now we will provide some direct references to Ophel as a dwelling place from the Bible.

Nehemiah 3:26 Moreover the Nethinims dwelt in Ophel, unto the place over against the water gate toward the east, and the tower that lieth out.

We see that Nethinims dwelt at Ophel. These were dwelling places near to Solomon's palace. Solomon's wife's palace also must have been here as referred in the earlier passages. So by a compulsion, we have to place Solomon's palace and his wife's palace at Ophel and this displaces the temple out of Ophel. As mentioned earlier, the entire chain that we have built cannot be disturbed or distributed as we like, but must fit in as one piece.

2 Chron 27:3 He built the high gate of the house of the LORD, and on the wall of Ophel he built much.

We read about King Jotham in 2 Chronicles chapter 27. We read that he built the high gate of the house of the Lord "and" on the wall of Ophel he built much. We don't know what he built much

on the wall of Ophel. But this passage makes it clear that the temple was not in Ophel. The house of the Lord and Ophel are differentiated from each other clearly. We see that these two items are built by him as separate items.

Why the temple cannot be at the city of David

Nehemiah 3:26 Moreover the Nethinims dwelt in Ophel, unto the place over against the water gate toward the east, and the tower that lieth out.

Taking evidence from the same verse quoted above, we see that the Nethinims dwelt from Ophel until the water gate which was over the Gihon spring. From the above verse we also see that a tower was built that was lying outside the city walls. So if there were dwelling places from the Gihon spring to the Ophel, why try to put the temple in the city of David? Now let us see some more direct evidences as to why the temple cannot be in the city of David.

1. Threshing floors are never kept inside a city

Well, this is one direct point to say that the temple was not in the city of David. When David captured the city of David, there wasn't any threshing floor inside it. From a farming perspective, a threshing floor had to be built at a windy place and usually they are outside the city. We read about Ruth gleaning in the field of Boaz in the book of Ruth. The book of Ruth chapter 3 narrates the happenings at the field and threshing floor of Boaz. At the end we see that she went into the city from the threshing floor.

Ruth 3:15 Also he said, Bring the vail that thou hast upon thee, and hold it. And when she held it, he measured six measures of barley, and laid it on her: and she went into the city.

Here also it is no different. We cannot imagine a big flat place in the midst of the city of David where threshing took place. An interesting point to note here is that we are not talking about the dimensions of the temple and whether the city of David can hold such a big premises within itself. We are just discussing about threshing floors not located inside the city. We will talk about dimensions later.

2. King David had to buy the threshing floor as he did not own it (He already owned the city of David)

We will now consider the aspect of David buying the threshing floor. We read from 2 Samuel chapter 24 that King David had to buy the threshing floor.

2 Samuel 24: 18 And Gad came that day to David, and said unto him, Go up, rear an altar unto the LORD in the threshingfloor of Araunah the Jebusite.

2 Samuel 24: 19 And David, according to the saying of Gad, went up as the LORD commanded.

2 Samuel 24: 20 And Araunah looked, and saw the king and his servants coming on toward him: and Araunah went out, and bowed himself before the king on his face upon the ground.

2 Samuel 24: 21 And Araunah said, Wherefore is my lord the king come to his servant? And David said, To buy the threshingfloor of thee, to build an altar unto the LORD, that the plague may be stayed from the people.

2 Samuel 24: 22 And Araunah said unto David, Let my lord the king take and offer up what seemeth good unto him: behold, here be oxen for burnt sacrifice, and threshing instruments and other instruments of the oxen for wood.

2 Samuel 24: 23 All these things did Araunah, as a king, give unto the king. And Araunah said unto the king, The LORD thy God accept thee.

2 Samuel 24: 24 And the king said unto Araunah, Nay; but I will surely buy it of thee at a price: neither will I offer burnt offerings unto the LORD my God of that which doth cost me nothing. So David bought the threshingfloor and the oxen for fifty shekels of silver.

2 Samuel 24: 25 And David built there an altar unto the LORD, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings. So the LORD was intreated for the land, and the plague was stayed from Israel.

We see the conversation between Araunah and King David. Araunah offered the threshing floor free of cost to David. But he refused to take it saying that he cannot take something free and offer it to the Lord. He was stubborn in paying a price for it. David was already owning the entire city of David. He had captured it and it became his own city. We read about that in 2 Samuel chapter 5.

2 Samuel 5: 6 And the king and his men went to Jerusalem unto the Jebusites, the inhabitants of the land: which spake unto David, saying, Except thou take away the blind and the lame, thou shalt not come in hither: thinking, David cannot come in hither.

2 Samuel 5: 7 Nevertheless David took the strong hold of Zion: the same is the city of David.

2 Samuel 5: 8 And David said on that day, Whosoever getteth up to the gutter, and smiteth the Jebusites, and the lame and the blind, that are hated of David's soul, he shall be chief and captain. Wherefore they said, The blind and the lame shall not come into the house.

2 Samuel 5: 9 So David dwelt in the fort, and called it the city of David. And David built round about from Millo and inward.

A simple question before us is, Should David pay for something that he already owned? The straight answer is No. Clearly we see that he only owned the city up to the limits. Now the threshing floor was just beyond the Ophel. We will prove this with another verse mentioned below. Because he didn't own the threshing floor he bought it and this proves that it was outside the city limits of the city of David. Hence, the threshing floor cannot be in the city of David.

2 Chronicles 3:1 Then Solomon began to build the house of the LORD at Jerusalem in mount Moriah, where the LORD appeared unto David his father, in the place that David had prepared in the threshingfloor of Ornan the Jebusite.

So where was the threshing floor? It was on Mount Moriah and not in the city of David. We don't need another direct verse from the Bible to prove that the temple was not in the city of David. Yet we will quote one more evidence that the threshing floor was outside the city of David. No one can argue against the verse.

3. The Angel was standing outside the city of Jerusalem to destroy it, near the threshing floor

We see an angel standing outside the city of David who was sent to plague the residents of Jerusalem as a chastisement for David's sin. He numbered the people of Israel against the will of God and hence God sent his angel to teach him a lesson. Now consider the following verse:

2 Sam 24:16 And when the angel stretched out his hand upon Jerusalem to destroy it, the LORD repented him of the evil, and said to the angel that destroyed the people, It is enough: stay now thine hand. And the angel of the LORD was by the threshingplace of Araunah the Jebusite.

In order to stretch his hand upon the entire city of Jerusalem, the angel must be standing outside the city. Only then it will make sense to say that he was stretching his hand upon Jerusalem. One cannot be standing inside the city and still stretch his hand upon the entire city. It doesn't make sense here as the angel was delivering a judgment on the people. Even when the angels delivered judgment on Sodom and Gomorrah, the angels went out of the city and commanded the fire and brimstone to fall upon those cities. Here we read that the angel was by the threshing floor of Araunah. This is another solid proof that the threshing floor was outside Jerusalem.

4. Solomon brought the ark of the covenant out of the city of David to the temple

1 Kings 8: 1 Then Solomon assembled the elders of Israel, and all the heads of the tribes, the chief of the fathers of the children of Israel, unto king Solomon in Jerusalem, that they might bring up the ark of the covenant of the LORD out of the city of David, which is Zion.

1 Kings 8: 2 And all the men of Israel assembled themselves unto king Solomon at the feast in the month Ethanim, which is the seventh month.

1 Kings 8: 3 And all the elders of Israel came, and the priests took up the ark.

1 Kings 8: 4 And they brought up the ark of the LORD, and the tabernacle of the congregation, and all the holy vessels that were in the tabernacle, even those did the priests and the Levites bring up.

1 Kings 8: 5 And king Solomon, and all the congregation of Israel, that were assembled unto him, were with him before the ark, sacrificing sheep and oxen, that could not be told nor numbered for multitude.

1 Kings 8: 6 And the priests brought in the ark of the covenant of the LORD unto his place, into the oracle of the house, to the most holy place, even under the wings of the cherubims.

In the above scripture portion, we read how Solomon finished the temple and took the ark of the covenant out of the city of David to be placed in the temple. There is no confusion in the passage given above and it is crystal clear that the ark was taken “up” out of the city of David, **only to be placed in the temple at the most holy place**. I already mentioned that those who wish to promote the idea of the temple in the city of David twist this verse or some even ignore this verse. How can such a direct passage be ignored? Those who say that the temple was in the city of David are doing so, misunderstanding certain scripture portions which are figurative. So what happens when you ignore a direct reference and misinterpret a figurative reference? You get completely lost. And that’s what happened to those who misinterpret “Zion”. We will see the explanation on Zion later.

5. Not the place near Gihon spring, but even the valley near Ophel was too deep

2 Chron 33:14 Now after this he built a wall without the city of David, on the west side of Gihon, in the valley, even to the entering in at the fish gate, and compassed about Ophel, and raised it up a very great height, and put captains of war in all the fenced cities of Judah.

The above passage speaks about King Manasseh. He built a wall on the west side of Gihon, to the east of the city of David and this wall compassed about Ophel and was raised to a very great height. Now this is another direct indication as to where the temple stood. If the area near Ophel was to be raised to a very great height, the valley must become so deep. This tallies perfectly with the southeast corner of the temple. Some people argue that the valley near Gihon spring was so deep. This was never the case. There is no archaeological nor documentary evidence to prove this. Even today, looking at the topography, there is no logical way one can vouch for the valley to be so deep near Gihon spring. Rather we find from the scriptures that the place near Ophel was raised to a very great height.

6. Why Gihon spring could not have given water to the temple.

Those who promote the theory of the temple in the city of David have two misinterpretations of the scriptures which has led them astray in locating the temple. One is the misreading of the concept of living waters and the other is the misinterpretation of Zion. We will consider the Gihon spring in this discussion point.

There is an assumption that Gihon spring water was used for the temple. They quote few verses from the scriptures as mentioned below:

Psalm 87: 7 As well the singers as the players on instruments shall be there: all my springs are in thee.

Psalm 29: 3 The voice of the LORD is upon the waters: the God of glory thundereth: the LORD is upon many waters.

Psalms 46:4 There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the most High.

Psalms 46: 5 God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved: God shall help her, and that right early.

Even a cursory glance at these portions will show clearly that these are figurative scriptures. There are so many such scriptures that you will get lost if you do a literal interpretation. Now consider these verses:

1 Kings 8: 12 Then spake Solomon, The LORD said that he would dwell in the thick darkness.

Psalms 104:2 Who coverest thyself with light as with a garment: who stretchest out the heavens like a curtain:

Do I need to tell you that these are figurative statements each true in its own sense describing one aspect of God? If we take a literal interpretation, what do we conclude? Does God dwell in light or in darkness? There are many such examples from the scriptures but we will stop with the above instance. Therefore, we cannot take poetic, figurative passages as a reference to the location of the temple of God. Not only that the best is yet to come. Now I will tell why Gihon spring could have never given water to the temple.

Joshua who conquered many cities could not conquer Jerusalem. But David found out the water shaft near Gihon which was later rediscovered by Sir Charles Warren, and captured the city. The Jebusites were confident that David cannot capture it. But Joab went through the shaft and made the job easy for David. After he captured Jerusalem, it was called the city of David or Zion. The waters were used by the residents of the city. It was outside the city on the eastern slopes of the city. King Solomon was crowned near the Gihon spring as we saw earlier. But the waters of Gihon spring remained outside the city. It remained so until the time of King Hezekiah. During the time of king Hezekiah, the Assyrians came against him. Fearing an invasion, Hezekiah decided to safeguard the waters of Gihon.

If King Solomon had used the Gihon spring for his temple, it must have become a well-guarded area as the temple was well-guarded. The temple contained treasures and no one will disagree that the temple was well-guarded. Do you think a wise man such as Solomon would have left a gaping hole in the security of the temple and built it unguarded? It would be absurd for Solomon to leave Gihon spring unguarded especially after knowing the history of how his father's men captured the city of David entering through the water shaft.

From history we clearly know that until king Hezekiah's time, Gihon spring was not protected and it was he who diverted the waters to the city of David. Is not this a historic and open evidence before our very eyes? Can anyone dispute the fact that Gihon was not protected until Hezekiah's time?

7. Gad asked David to go “up” and build the altar to God

When David was undergoing the punishment meted out by God, he was probably in his palace with his elders. The angel was sending pestilence upon Jerusalem and people were dying. David was pleading with God to permit the punishment on him and upon his family rather than on the innocent people. At this point, the angel of the Lord sent the prophet Gad to David and asked him to build an altar to the Lord. Now let us see the verses:

1 Chronicles 21: 18 Then the angel of the LORD commanded Gad to say to David, that David should go up, and set up an altar unto the LORD in the threshingfloor of Ornan the Jebusite.

1 Chronicles 21: 19 And David went up at the saying of Gad, which he spake in the name of the LORD.

1 Chronicles 21: 20 And Ornan turned back, and saw the angel; and his four sons with him hid themselves. Now Ornan was threshing wheat.

We don't know exactly where David was when prophet Gad met him. But he had to go “up” to the threshing floor from where he was. So where was he? If the threshing floor was in the city of David, he must be at a lower elevation than that. We see that lower than the city of David, we have the Kidron valley and nothing else. For an argument sake one may say that David's palace was at the southern most end of the city of David. Even if we accept this for an argument sake, then Solomon's palace must be placed between David's palace and the temple. Where is the space for this? This is impossible. That is why I said in the beginning that the whole piece starting from Fort Antonia till the Gihon spring is a big interconnected chain of buildings and placing one item in the wrong place will throw other scriptures into a disarray.

The only proper way of addressing this is that David was in his palace in the northern end of the city of David. This was also the northern boundary of the city of David. The Ophel was unbuilt at this time and the threshing floor was further north of Ophel. So David had to go “up” and also outside the city of David to the threshing floor. Since it was not his and he didn't own it, he had to purchase it for a price from Ornan. If you place the temple at the southern edge of the present Temple Mount, all the biblical scriptures will perfectly tally with the location.

8. What about Zion? Does not the Bible say that God dwells in Zion?

The word Zion has at least 3 meanings. There may be more, but we will consider only 3 which are required for our discussion.

1. Zion means the literal city of David – *2 Samuel 5: 7 Nevertheless David took the strong hold of Zion: the same is the city of David.*
2. Zion collectively refers to the Israelites – *Isaiah 51: 3 For the LORD shall comfort Zion: he will comfort all her waste places; and he will make her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the LORD; joy and gladness shall be found therein, thanksgiving, and the voice of melody.*

3. Zion means a spiritual dwelling place of God – *Psalm 132: 13 For the LORD hath chosen Zion; he hath desired it for his habitation. 14 This is my rest for ever: here will I dwell; for I have desired it.*

The first one mentioned above needs no explanation. The second meaning is that Zion refers to the Israel as a whole. If someone is try to show that Zion must be like a “ploughed field” using Micah 3 : 12, then we should also try to locate Zion as a desert. So whether Zion was ploughed as a field or left like a desert as in Isaiah 51: 3? Here, we cannot refer Zion only to the city of David but to the whole of Israel. From history we know how Israel which was a barren land has now grown to one of the biggest exporters of fruits in the world.

Thirdly, Zion means the spiritual dwelling place of God which cannot be seen with our literal eyes. It is this Zion which is mentioned in most places where the Bible tells us that God dwelt in Zion. If we try to assign the city of David meaning to every word Zion in the Bible, we will get lost in direction. We have already seen that Bible is full of figurative statements and we need to account for it when we study the Bible. If we make a listing of all verses about Zion from the Bible and read it together, it will not provide us with one meaning. This is ample proof that we need to take some of the verses only from a spiritual angle. Hence, let us not get lost that the temple was in the city of David because God dwells in Zion.

Conclusion

There are many direct references to the placement of the temple in the Bible and we must take that literally and move forward. God knew that after 2000 years people would be debating the location of the temple on websites and YouTube videos. Hence, he chose to place a direct verse in the Bible which settles the whole matter.

2 Chronicles 3:1 Then Solomon began to build the house of the LORD at Jerusalem in mount Moriah, where the LORD appeared unto David his father, in the place that David had prepared in the threshingfloor of Ornan the Jebusite.

I think no one can argue against this verse. Even if you want to, you may dig up the entire city of David to find nothing. Going by a simple argument that the entire city of David was already fully inhabited, Solomon did not demolish houses in order to build the temple. He built it on an empty space, on the threshing floor. After reading this article, people who are really interested in knowing the truth will accept that the temple stood on Mount Moriah. Others will still hold on to their skewed ideas and still say that the temple stood in the city of David. God bless.

About the author:

Samraj, an independent Bible researcher from India. He hails from a learned Christian community and teaches Sunday school at a church. An Insurance

professional of 25 years' experience, he has many years of research in the Bible with special reference to the subject of locating the temple.