“As the navel is set in the centre of the human body, so is the land of Israel the navel of the world... situated in the centre of the world, and Jerusalem in the centre of the land of Israel, and the sanctuary in the centre of Jerusalem, and the holy place in the centre of the sanctuary, and the ark in the centre of the holy place, and the foundation stone before the holy place, because from it the world was founded.” –Midrash Tanchuma, Qedoshim.

The rabbis teach that the *Even ha-Shetiyah* is the Rock that currently lies under the Muslim Dome of the Rock on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem.
Even ha-Shetiyah
means “the Foundation Stone”. This refers to the
Foundation Stone
of the creation of the world by God on the First Day. It is taught that this rock was in the Garden of Eden.

“The Almighty created the world in the same manner as a child is formed in its mother's womb. Just as a child begins to grow from its navel and then develops into its full form, so the world began from its central point and then developed in all direction.” –Zev Vilnay, Legends of Jerusalem

The Zohar, (a Hebrew collection of commentaries on the Torah), describes this mystical stone:

“When the Holy One, blessed be He, was about to create world, He detached one precious stone from underneath His throne of glory and plunged it into the abyss; one end of it remained fastened therein, whilst the other end stood above...out of which the world started, spreading itself to the right and left and into all directions.”

Even the Arabs support this Hebrew custom concerning the *Even ha-Shetiyah*. Accordingly, they have inscribed on the face of the Dome, “The Rock of the Temple from the Garden of Eden.” The northern gate of the mosque facing the foundation stone is
named the Gate of Paradise. On the floor in front of this gate is a stone called by the Arabs “the Stone of Eden.”

In Hebrew tradition, this was the first place to be seen after The Flood receded and is the Rock where G-d sent Abraham to sacrifice His son Isaac. It is also believed that King David put the Ark of the Covenant on this Rock and dedicated it to be the future site of the Temple. It is said that when the children of Israel were pursued by their enemies, they gathered around this Rock from which position, their enemies could not defeat them. For millennia, since the Temple was destroyed, this Rock was the most holy place only second to the Holy of Holies, itself.

The rabbis believe that God's redemption of Israel is tied to the rebuilding of the Temple and the Rock on which the Altar of Sacrifice stood, also known as the Rock of Abraham. For 2,000 years, it is taught, the Rock has been the focus of all the desires, hopes and prayers of the Jewish people. During the 1967 Six-Day War, when the Israeli soldiers liberated the Temple Mount, there was great excitement at the return of the Mount and the Rock of Abraham to the possession of the Nation of Israel. Gershon Salomon [1] relates his remembrance of the day the Temple Mount was liberated:

"On the 4th day of the Six Day War, I stood before this rock with my unit, the brave Israeli paratroopers who liberated the Temple Mount. We stood with tears in our eyes, tears of joy and excitement because we had the privilege of standing before the G-d of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob at this place. We felt the presence of G-d and we could hear His voice saying, 'I brought you back to this most holy place to rebuild My House and to bring **[2]** Mashiach ben David. We felt a very deep responsibility for the privilege that G-d had given us."

They found that the Muslim Dome covered the holy Rock. The Muslims built the Dome in the late 7th century when they first occupied Jerusalem. Under the Rock there are steps leading down to a mysterious cave. At the end of the cave there is a tunnel, which is closed off with a stone door. Salomon says there is a very old tradition that this door leads to a secret room where the Ark of the Covenant was hidden before the destruction of the First Temple. Some rabbis even believe that the Wilderness Tabernacle was dismantled and stored in a room under the Temple Mount as well. According to this tradition, Muslims who tried to open this door died on the spot. As a result, no further attempts were made to open it.

Salomon believes the rebuilding of the Temple will open a new age, not only in the life of Israel, but also in the life of all the nations.

"G-d chose this place in Jerusalem to be the gate from heaven where He reflects His glory, His blessings, and His love to Israel and to all the nations. Since the destruction of the Temple this

gate from heaven has been closed. The ingathering of the people of Israel and the rebirth of the State partially opened this gate. The blessings and glory of G-d once again started to cover the people and land of Israel. However, the rebuilding of the Temple will completely open this gate. G-d's blessing and glory will completely cover the people and the land of Israel and this time also all the nations."

This is the reason that the rebuilding of the Temple is such a critical event. In the unfolding of prophecy, it will lead to the coming of the Messiah. Gershon Salomon and his *Temple Mount Faithful* group want to make this a reality.

However, there has been an ongoing controversy concerning the actual location of the Temple Mount. An increasing number of archaeologists and theologians are challenging the traditions that place the former Jewish Temples on the established Temple Mount site. Yeshua said in His Olivet Discourse that not one stone would remain of the Temple:

"Jesus left the temple and was walking away when his disciples came up to him to call his attention to its buildings. 'Do you see all these things?' he asked. 'Truly I tell you, not one stone here will be left on another; every one will be thrown down.'" (Matthew 24:1-2)

This very statement by Yeshua would seem to disqualify the traditional Temple Mount site since the Western (Wailing) Wall) still exists.

Dr. Ernest L. Martin, one of the challengers, was the Chairman of the Department of Theology at a college in England and another in California. He supervised college students at the most significant archeological excavation in Jerusalem for two months of each year for five years. His countless years of study, in-depth research, and archeological digs culminated in his authoring the book, [3] *The Temples that Jerusalem Forgot*.

Martin's book determines that the Temples of God in Jerusalem were located over the Gihon Spring and not under the Dome of the Rock. His exhaustive research led to the conclusion that the Temples of Solomon and Zerubbabel were located on the Ophel mound just north of the original Mount Zion.

The traditional Temple Mount, for size and location, was better suited for the Roman Fortress that was erected in Jerusalem. In fact, the Jewish historian, Josephus, describes the Roman Fortress in such a manner as to place it there. The 'Rock', the large outcropping located under the Muslim Dome, was thought to be the Praetorium where Pilate judged Yeshua before His crucifixion rather than the place of the altar. In fact, a Christian tradition states that Yeshua's footprints remain imprinted in that Rock giving credence to the possibility that it *was* Pilate's judgment seat.

Author Robert Cornuke, president of the BASE Institute [4] , has taken Dr. Martin's research and added his own to deliver a book,
Temple
, more simply written, that encapsulates Martin's research as well as new discoveries about the theorized location of the former Temples.
Temple
is only 200 pages, but thoroughly covers the subject matter. For a fuller understanding, I recommend Cornuke's book,
Temple
or Martin's in-depth 476-page book,
The Temples that Jerusalem Forgot
.

When the Lord allows the Third Temple to be rebuilt, if it is on the traditional site, perhaps it would be due to the fact that it will be occupied by the Antichrist and will be destroyed in due time. Possibly the Lord is keeping the *actual* site untouched and unpolluted for the Millennial Temple described by the prophet Ezekiel (Eze. 40-48).

"And He said to me, 'Son of man, this is the place of My throne and the place of the soles of My feet, where I will dwell in the midst of the children of Israel forever.'" (Ezekiel 43:7)

[1] Founder of the *Temple Mount and Land of Israel Faithful*

[2] Messiah, Son of David

[3] The Temples the Jerusalem Forgot, ASK Publications, 2000, www.askelm.com

[4] Bible Archaeology Search and Exploration