

Smoky Mountain Bible Institute

Archeology 108 N. T. Places & Artifacts II

Stones: Jesus quoted the psalmist (Psalm 118) when He said, “The stone the builders rejected will become the cornerstone.” The city of Jerusalem is a treasure trove of amazing stones with great stories to tell. Here are just a few. The capstone to one of the temple towers was discovered at the base of the southwest wall of the Temple Mount. How do we know this was a temple capstone? Because these towers had designated locations for the trumpeters to stand to blow the call to worship, and on this stone is carved “...to the place of the trumpeting.” So it is clearly a capstone by its design, and a temple capstone because of its inscription. The sundial, discovered by excavators in 1972, was calibrated for the sun’s movement in Jerusalem to mark time and seasons in accord with the Jewish calendar. It has a menorah carved on the back and was a likely tool for the priest who had to observe everything in its proper time. The Entry Warning, located in 1871, is a slab with a warning to gentiles: “No gentile may enter within this temple barrier.” This warning and others found just like it, carved in Greek, match those described by the Jewish historian Josephus. These were hung on a low wall that divided the public square from the sacred inner courtyard. These low walls are alluded to when Saint Paul writes to the church at Ephesus in chapter 2, verse 4: ***“for he [Jesus] is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down the dividing wall of hostility.”*** What do these three stones have in common? They along with thousands just like them are rock solid witnesses to the fulfillment of Jesus’ words found in Mark 13:2: And Jesus said to him, ***“Do you see these great buildings? There will not be left here one stone upon another that will not be thrown down.”*** We know this to have been fulfilled in 70AD when the Romans crushed a Jewish rebellion, and to be rid of their rebellious religion, the Romans completely destroyed their temple. These stones are all that remain of the once glorious second temple.

The Arch of Titus: In 70 AD, Rome had enough of the rebellious Judeans as mentioned in the last paragraph. So, the emperor sent his great general Titus to quell the rebellion. He and his army demolished the city of Jerusalem, killing most of its inhabitants, and flattening the 585-year-old temple as mentioned above. We can look at the Arch of Titus in the ancient Roman Forum to see all the treasures they carted off from the temple. Clearly seen on this relief is the table for the showbread, the large menorah, and the sacred scroll of God’s law.

Temple Mount, The Dome of the Rock, and the Ark of the Covenant. An archeologist by the name of Leen Ritmeyer is well known in his field for putting forth interesting theories about the location of the Holy of Holies portion of the ancient Temple. That Temple was destroyed in 70 AD and some 600 years later the Muslims built the “Dome of the Rock” (that big gold dome you see on most pictures of Jerusalem) on the same location. Ritmeyer postulates with some convincing, matching measurements that the wall foundations of the Holy of Holies and the carved spot where the Ark of the Covenant sat, can be clearly seen and identified. This rock has many cuts and scars on it from numerous construction and demolition events on that location over the millennia. However, the Dome of the Rock has stood in that location for over 1300 years and the marks Ritmeyer identifies match the measurements given in scripture, so that his postulations are quite possibly accurate for the location of this sacred place.

In Christ
Pastor Portier