

The Temple Mount



Richard Lawrence

Edition 1

Introduction

This article is **adapted** from the short story, 'The Knights of the Dragon' in my book 'The Dragon Project' and from 'The King James Bible and Religion' section from my book, 'A Thesis on the Philosophy of Life'.

In a very few instances within this article, I have used text covering historical facts (in full and in part) from the internet.

This Book is for Charity

This book has been written for charity and if you find it interesting, please consider a small donation to my charity of choice, ['The Sick Kids Friends Foundation'](#) who support the Royal Hospital for Sick Children (RHSC) in Edinburgh which was the first children's hospital in Scotland. It was built on its present site in Sciennes Road, Edinburgh in 1895 and opened by HRH Princess Beatrice of York, the granddaughter of Queen Victoria.

The current patron is HRH Princess Beatrice of York, granddaughter of Queen Elizabeth II. Every year over 100,000 children pass through the doors of the hospital, ranging in age from just a few hours old to aged 16 in some specialities. The majority of the patients come from Edinburgh, the Lothians and Fife, but the hospital treats children from all over Scotland.

Acknowledgment

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The Temple Mount

The Temple Mount or Haram esh-Sharif as it is known to the Muslim faith, is one of the most religious sites in the world and is venerated by Christianity, Judaism and Islam. It is a walled in area, situated in the south-eastern corner of the old city part of Jerusalem. The enclosure consists of a courtyard surrounding an elevated area, some 36 acres in size with arched structures around the 'Dome of the Rock'. There are a number of gates and some are blocked off. Within the Temple Mount there are numerous structures and substructures from various periods including great works of art, Muslim prayer pots, drinking fountains and some are used for the washing of feet. In Muslim tradition, it is also known as the 'Furthermost Sanctuary' (*Arabic, masjid al-aksa*) from which the Prophet Mohammed, and the Angel Gabriel, made the Night Journey to the Throne of God (*The Koran, Sura Al-Isra' 17:1*).

Over the centuries, religious armies have battled each other to gain dominance of the Temple Mount. King Solomon, the last Hebrew (*Jewish*) ruler of The Kingdom of Israel, built the 1st Temple there some three thousand years ago. Within Israel, the 12 Hebrew tribes constantly endured discontent with each other and after the death of Solomon, the Kingdom of Israel was split in two and became known as The Northern Kingdom (*Israel*) which consisted of 10 of the tribes (*excluding Judah and Benjamin*). It lasted for about 210 years until it was conquered by the Assyrian Empire in 722 BCE. Its capital was Samaria which was revived in 1967, when the West Bank was defined by Israeli officials as the Judea and Samaria Area, of which the entire area north of the Jerusalem District is termed as Samaria. The West Bank is a landlocked territory near the Mediterranean coast of Western Asia, bordered by Jordan to the east and by Israel to the south, west and north. The West Bank also contains a significant section of the western Dead Sea shore. The Southern Kingdom of Judah existed as an independent state until 586 BCE when it was conquered by the Babylonian Empire. The 1st Temple was destroyed by the Babylonians in 586 BCE but that year the Hebrews (*Jews*) under King Herod built the 2nd Temple.

Jerusalem and the 2nd Temple were destroyed by the Romans in 70 and the Temple Mount was left in ruins. In 312 the Roman Emperor, Constantine the Great, converted to Christianity and in 326 he ordered the old temple ruins to be torn down and 'The Church of the Holy Sepulchre' to be built in its place. The church is thought to be built on the site where Jesus was buried and resurrected. This building was destroyed by fire in 614 when the Sassanid Empire, under Khosrau II, invaded Jerusalem. In 630 the Byzantine Emperor, Heraclius recaptured the city and rebuilt the church. After the Muslim conquest of the city by the Caliph Omar ibn al-Khattab in 638, he ordered the clearing of part of the Temple Mount and the building of a Muslim house of prayer. In the years that followed, Caliph Abd al-Malik and his son, Caliph al-Walid I, built the 'Dome of the Rock' on the eastern side of the Temple Mount, the holiest site, known to the Muslims as *Qubbat as-Sakhrah*. It enshrined the outcrop of bedrock that is believed to be the place of the sacrifice on Mount Moriah. (*Gen 22:1-8 God tells Abraham to take his son Isaac to the Land of Moriah to be sacrificed*). They also built the large mosque at the southern end of the Haram, which came to be called al-Aksa after the Koranic name attributed to the entire area.

In 1099, Jerusalem fell to the European Christian Crusaders who slaughtered the population of Muslims and the Jews without quarter. The 'Dome of the Rock' was converted into a church called Templum Domini and al-Aksa became a church called Templum Solomonis. In 1118, part of a building on the 'Temple Mount' was granted use to 'The Knights Templar' who were sworn to protect pilgrims visiting Jerusalem which was then under Christian control. In 1187, the Muslims, under Saladin, took control of Syria whereby Saladin became the first sultan of Egypt and Syria. He defeated the Crusaders at the decisive Battle of Hattin in 1187 and took over control of Palestine and Jerusalem although some territories remained under the control of the Christian Crusaders. He spared the population of Jerusalem on the condition of its surrender and provided the Christians left the city. Saladin was a 'Sunni' Muslim of Kurdish ethnicity and at his death, he had given all his wealth away.

The Knights Templar Order were very prominent in Christian finance and developed innovative financial techniques that were a form of early banking. By 1307, The Holy Land, an area located between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea which also includes the Eastern Bank of the Jordan River was lost by the Crusaders. Traditionally, it is synonymous with both the biblical Land of Israel and historical Palestine. King Philip IV of France, who was in heavy debt to the order, took advantage of the loss of the Holy Land and had the Knights Templar arrested and burnt at the stake under false confessions. Under pressure from King Philip, Pope Clement V disbanded the order in 1312.

During the 1948 Israeli War of Independence, Jordan retained control over Jerusalem's Old City and the Temple Mount and subsequently refused entry to the area to any Jewish person. During the 1967 Six-Day War, the Israeli Defence Forces captured Jerusalem and liberated the Temple Mount, reclaiming Jewish Israeli control over the area since the destruction of the Second Temple. Although Israel could have taken control of the Islamic holy places, they were put in the care of a Jordanian Muslim Council and Jews were barred from praying on the Mount in the hope of avoiding bloodshed and preventing a holy war.

By 2017, the Israelis had drawn up the plans for the 3rd Temple on the Mount with a desire to build and to declare Jerusalem the capital city of Israel. Islam was spreading across the world and although the Israelis were their sworn enemy as well as the Americans who supported them, Islam also remained in serious conflict with itself as the Shia Muslims fought with the Sunni Muslims. The 'deep state' of America armed the Sunni Muslims of Saudi Arabia and their associated Sunni mercenaries in the middle east as well as the Israelis in Israel, whilst others supported the Shia Muslims of Iran a sworn enemy of Saudi Arabia and Israel. The Europeans simply compounded the problem, by blindly following the 'Coudenhove-Kalergi Plan' (*the integration of races*) and encouraging the mass migration of Shia and Sunni Muslims from their home countries to Europe.

The Israelis continue to hold the world to account for the Holocaust where over 5 million Jews were exterminated in concentration camps. The event is used as a 'knife of conscience against the throat' to squash any criticism of Israeli aspirations in expanding its territory in Palestine and Syria. Any criticism is deemed anti-Semitism, anti-Jewish and a direct attack on the Jewish people. The

Americans consider that Iran (*a Muslim Shia Islamic country*) and Syria (*a mixture of Muslim Sunni Islam, Muslim Shia Islam and Christians*) poses a direct threat to Israeli territorial expansion. A catalyst is once again building for an all-out war between the Israeli Jews and Islamic Shia Iran as well as their proxies, especially the Muslim tribal Sunni and Shia in Syria, who once again, will take up arms against each other. It remains to be seen if Saudi Arabia, a Muslim Sunni country will capitulate to the Israel expansion, the building of a 3rd Hebrew (*Jewish*) Temple and a war with Iran or side with other Muslims against Israel. In the background, lurks Turkey, an Islamic country with 65% Islamic Sunni, and the rest made up of Islamic Shia and Christians. Turkey has an extremely powerful army.

The western world is descending into chaos, and the religious conflicts within the societies of the west are played down by the western media. Throughout history, such suppression has raised dictators like Hitler, Mussolini and Franco with a right-wing agenda and in Hitler's case a desire to exterminate Jews. It is very likely that the armies of the Israelis, the Christians and the Islamic religions will fight in the middle east to once again, seek the final solution. Israel has nuclear weapons and very soon, the Iranians will possess them as well. It remains to be seen if the Israelis will build their 3rd Temple on the Temple Mount or perhaps, the Temple Mount will once again, be reduced to ruins?

Religion

At the core of every society there has to be morality and within most religions there is morality, but it is morality that surpasses any religion.

In 1604 King James the 6th of Scotland and the 1st of England sponsored the translation of the English speaking, King James Bible for the Church of England. It is a book of two parts, the first part is based on the 12 Tribes of Israel; their Judaism Religion, their history and nomadic struggle to find their own land and a land promised by their God. There is no doubt that over the centuries, the Hebrew (*Jewish*) faith and the Hebrew Bible was based on the passing down of stories and the writings by their prophets to provide the Israelites with morality and a hope for a better life, especially in 'The Ten Commandments' as dictated to Moses by their God. The Hebrew Bible in translation, is known as the 'Old Testament' and there are many accounts of how God aided them in destroying their enemies. The second part is 'The New Testament' and is very liberal. It focuses on the life and teachings of Yeshua (Jesus) who was reputed to be 'The Son of God' and crucified on the cross by the Roman Empire. It includes the four Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles, twenty-one Epistles by St Paul and others, and the book of Revelation. The four Gospels were based on the testaments of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John who were followers of Jesus. The four Gospels were laid down in writing, some 66-110 years after the death of Jesus.

In the 'New Testament' the Romans ruled Judea with an iron and violent hand to maintain control. Jesus witnessed the violence, corruption and much decadence, which had become the norm, even amongst many in the Hebrew community. Jesus had become a prophet, a philosopher, and he did not seek control over the Hebrews, because his 'parables' were about morality, ethics, integrity,

virtue, peace and kindness. The irony being that many centuries before him, Homer and Socrates had already concluded all of this; which is reflected in their own teachings of philosophy. Why did the Hebrews elect to save Barabbas a known killer, from Roman crucifixion when they could have saved Jesus, a virtuous man, who was crucified instead? Perhaps it was because the Christian liberal preaching's of Jesus and his growing Christian congregation posed a direct threat to Judaism, the Jewish faith, and one must remember, that Jesus was a Jew.

In 96 AD a Hebrew (*Jew*) named John, whilst a prisoner in a Roman prison at Patmos, wrote 'The Book of Revelation' after claiming he had received a vision from heaven. The book was intended to be distributed amongst the Christian Churches within the seven important cities in Asia Minor: Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea. His writings offered the Christians, under Roman dominance, hope and a promise that their persecution would end with the destruction of the Roman Empire. Just like Moses (*the Israelite deliverer from Egypt who wrote down the 10 commandments*), Abraham from Ur, in Babylonia (*father of the Israelite nation*), Yeshua (*reputed to be the son of God*), Joseph (*the Israelite seer*), Joseph Smith (*the Mormon*) and many other prophets, John claimed to be guided by God. His 'Book of Revelation' is interpreted in many different ways and some argue that it is relative to the past whilst others, claim the future. The end of days (*Armageddon*) is thought to have already happened and yet some believe it is yet to happen. All agree, that war is caused by the imbedded aggression of the beast in human nature.

In the 1st century after the death of Jesus, 'Paul the Apostle' who was a Roman Jew and commonly known as Saint Paul and also by his Hebrew name, Saul of Tarsus, was an apostle who taught the gospel of Christ and Christianity, to the first-century world. He claimed that the resurrected Jesus appeared to him in a great light. He was struck blind, but after three days his sight was restored and Paul began to preach that Jesus of Nazareth is the Jewish Messiah and the Son of God. Approximately half of the book of Acts in the New Testament, deals with Paul's life and works. Thirteen of the twenty-seven books in the New Testament have traditionally been attributed to Paul. In the time of Paul, there were many strands of Christianity and religious teachings.

Three hundred years after the crucifixion of Jesus, the Roman Emperor Constantine established himself as the head of the church in around 313 A.D., which made this new "Christianity" the official religion of the Roman Empire. Many claimed it was a political move to bring together all the variants of the peoples and their religions to gain control over them. In this Roman Catholic Religion, you attend religious confession with a Catholic priest and seek redemption for your sins which is the ultimate method of religious indoctrination and control. This resulted in the establishment of 'The Vatican' in Rome and its Roman Catholic religious control of the masses throughout the world. In the 16th century, the Reformation (alternatively named the Protestant Reformation or the European Reformation) was a religious movement within Western Christianity that posed a religious and political challenge to the Roman Catholic Church and papal authority in particular.

Muḥammad ibn 'Abdullāh founded the 'Islamic Muslim Religion' during his lifetime, 570–8 June 632 AD and based it on the monotheistic teachings, previously preached by Adam, Abraham, Moses, Jesus, and other prophets. He is viewed as the final prophet of God in all the main branches of Islam.

He is referred to by many names, including Messenger of Allah, The Prophet Muhammad, Allah's Apostle and the Last Prophet of Islam. The two dominant religious strands of Islam are 'Sunni' with the main population established in Saudi Arabia and the other is 'Shia' in Iran. These religious strands, and their affiliates, continue to war with each other in the Middle East very much like the conflicts between the Catholic and Protestant religious orders.

In 1948 the Jews, who are Israelite Hebrews from the region of Judea and the descendants from the time of Abraham and Moses and the 12 Israelite nomadic tribes, finally found their promised land in 'The Levant' and established themselves in Palestine and fought the British for control of the area which included part of Jerusalem and the known Holy Land. The Americans and Western Countries, sanctioned the independent state of Israel. In 1967, during the 'Six-Day War' between Egypt, Syria and Israel, the Israelis captured the Sinai Peninsula, Gaza Strip, West Bank, Old City of Jerusalem, and the Golan Heights; the status of these territories subsequently became a major point of contention in the Arab-Israeli conflict. Ever since, the Palestinians, the Syrians and the Iranians, along with their associated affiliates have warred with Israel.

Throughout the centuries since the founding of the Jewish Judaism Religion, the Crucifixion of Jesus and the founding of the Catholic, Protestant, Islamic Sunni and Shia religions, the world has endured endless conflicts and wars as the armies representing those religions and their societies have fought each other. Today (2020) we continue to have conflicts in Europe between the Catholic, Protestant, Judaism and Islamic religions. In addition, we have conflicts and wars in the Middle East between the Islamic Sunni and Shia religions, in combination with conflicts and wars between both those Islamic religions, and the Judaism Jews of Israel - all intertwined with European Catholic and Protestant armies; especially America, that supports 'Sunni' Saudi Arabia and the Judaism Jews in Israel with the supply of military weapons and American armies.

The reading of the King James Bible and my religious studies raised a number of questions, too many to list in this thesis. However, I did come to the following conclusions - religions are started by individuals who invariably claim to have communed with an angel and even a God who sets them on a road to convert man to a religion. In the majority of these cases the reasons are either a good intent to lead mankind down a moral path, or for recognition, control, and often for financial gain. Conformity instills a hope for resurrection after death and in this way the followers are bound to that religion. There is always good versus evil in the religious teachings and each lay leader acts as the soul and conscience of the congregation.

Religious teachings are often challenged by individuals who seek a more liberal stance. Invariably, a prophet who teaches spiritual purity in life is often elevated on death to a 'Son of God' or even a 'God' status by false prophets for their own power and material gain. These false prophets create a religion and a religious following. In most of these religions there exists the Devil who provides the temptation and leads mankind down the path of evil and non-conformity.

The Church of Scotland is Presbyterian; having no head of faith or leadership group, and adheres to the Bible and Westminster Confession; the Church of Scotland celebrates two sacraments, Baptism and the Lord's Supper, as well as five other rites, such as confirmation and matrimony. It is a

member of the 'World Communion of Reformed Churches' which include the Church of South India, Presbyterian Church of East Africa, Presbyterian Church of Korea, Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus, Church of Jesus Christ in Madagascar, Federation of Swiss Protestant Churches, Protestant Church in Indonesia, Presbyterian Church (USA), Evangelical Church of Cameroon, and the Protestant Church in the Netherlands.

There is no doubt that people achieve a comfort in following a religion and believing in a God. It may be because they have experienced grief or having fallen from grace through alcoholism, crime or some other transgression against their own morality; and so, they seek forgiveness. Some become born again Christians to atone for the misdeeds which they have committed in their lifetime. Others who are lonely, find comfort from the social side of church attendance. One must never underestimate the power of a religion and a faith in God. Those who possess a fear of death, find solace in their faith and in a firm belief that when they die, their soul will be embraced by their God.

A minister from 'The Church of Scotland' could not answer my question on where God resided and the whereabouts of heaven; he merely stated that I should have faith like the unconditional love that a mother gives to her child. He held up the Holy Bible and told me to read it, but I had already done so. Within its contents, the morality stood out, but God and heaven remained elusive. I informed the minister of my conclusions but he cautioned me to have faith in God. He said that such a faith would ensure, that on my death, I would enter the 'Kingdom of Heaven'. I told him that Judaism, Islamic Sunni and Islamic Shia, Christian Catholic and Protestant religions, all believed in the same God, so what religion should I choose and why should I choose his? He seemed to regard me as a troublemaker, waved his hand and walked away.

It is due to the main five religious orders – Judaism, Islamic Sunni and Islamic Shia, Christian Catholic and Protestant, that we will never have peace in the world and it is a world that we all have to live in. Our virtue and our love for humanity surpasses all religions; but if religion becomes a catalyst for conflict and war, we lose both.