

The Temple Mount and Crustal Displacement

Reputed to be one of the most sacred areas on earth with spiritual roots embedded in the past and present allegiances of Jews, Christians and Muslims, the real history of the Temple Mount in Jerusalem is obscured by some questionable events that are believed to have occurred thousands of years ago and by mythical interpretations of events that promote individual belief systems. To uncover what happened in history- and pre-history- we must cast a net of inquiry that goes beyond religious beliefs and seek the aid of more recent insights of scholarship in archaeology and archaeoastronomy. Of particular value regarding the history of Israel is *The Bible Unearthed* by two Israeli archaeologists, Israel Finkelstein and Neil Asher Silberman published in 2002.

Instead of beginning the inquiry at the 10th century BC golden age of David and Solomon when the First Temple is said to have been built, bear with me as we start with the great insights of Charles H. Hapgood whose work on crustal displacement has upended science's view on the Earth's morphology and which, as we shall see, impacts the history of Near East civilization. In his books *Path of the Pole*, first published in 1958 under the title *Earth's Shifting Crust*, and *Maps of the Ancient Sea Kings*, first published in 1966, Hapgood has added fire to the field of geology by revealing that the standard approach to geological change referred to as "uniformitarianism" is inadequate to explain critical changes- catastrophes- that occurred in Earth's history. He died in 1982 after being accidentally hit by a car. During World War II he served in the Office of Strategic Services and after the war he became a professor of anthropology at Springfield College in Massachusetts. The formation of the Earth's surface is traditionally, and generally accurately, believed to be incrementally slow over its four and a half billion year history. Yet, in the 1970's the new awareness of continental drift was first derided and ignored and now has become accepted by mainstream science. In the same way, Hapgood's view of the frequent movement of

the Earth's surface over- not millions of years- but thousands of years has again speeded up the sluggish picture we have had of the changing planet.

With enthusiastic support from Albert Einstein, Hapgood revealed that every thirty thousand years or so the build-up of forces within the earth's core plus extraterrestrial forces from the sun and the planets create stresses between the Earth's thin thirty to fifty mile crust and the viscous mantle of turbulent molten lava of 1800 miles that separates the crust from the solid core. The last resultant movement of the entire crust was about 2000 miles occurring roughly between 15,000 BC and 10,000 BC at the end of the last Ice Age. The Earth's pole moved from the North Pole to Hudson Bay in Canada. The turmoil was catastrophic, ending an advanced world civilization and setting the stage for the re-constituted world as we know it. Earthquakes, tsunamis, floods, fall-out and concomitant diseases and starvation killed off many plant and animal species, destroyed coastal cities and changed the climate over large areas. But much knowledge that had accrued over millennia was preserved and incorporated in a new world civilization through the efforts of the survivors. The evidence offered by Hapgood for this cataclysm is twelve-fold:

1- The Ice Age in North America ended between 15,000BC to 10,000BC- coinciding approximately with the last crustal displacement. The movement of the North Pole to the Hudson Bay area allowed for the Canadian ice sheet to "retreat" by entering a more southern, warmer climate. Thus, the theory of crustal displacement offers a rational explanation for the disappearance of massive glaciations covering areas of the Earth.

2- The world-wide prevalence of ancient flood myths probably reflects the occurrence of real floods and tsunamis that once wreaked havoc on the world having its most dire effect on the coastal cities and low-lying areas.

3- Where crustal displacement caused tropical areas to become temperate, new opportunities developed for river valley civilizations in Egypt, Iraq, India and China.

4- The island of Atlantis shifted south some 2000 miles to become Antarctica. Its more polar location allowed snow and ice to cover the land mass with miles of deep, frozen precipitation.

5- Remains of what appears to be regular, man-hewed blocks of masonry have been found off the coasts of Bermuda, Cuba and Japan. Are they the remains of ancient buildings and cities?

6- Hapgood examined striations in hardened lava and rocks that oriented to the poles since they are closely located to magnetic north and south making possible the tracking of the movements of the poles through crustal displacement.

7- Remains of prehistoric animals in large numbers like the mammoths in Siberia resulting from some catastrophic event showed that they had been overcome by, perhaps, ash from earthquakes, buried, then moved by crustal displacement to their new burial latitudes.

8- Plato, the great Greek philosopher, wrote in some detail about an earlier civilization-Atlantis. Efforts to explain away his writings as fantasies or misinformation are hard to accept since he was a great, conservative philosopher not given to wild, subjective speculations.

9- Ancient maps have survived from the 14th, 15th, 16th and 17th centuries that were probably copies of earlier maps that depicted Antarctica before it was covered with miles of ice. Yet the topography of the land under the ice was not known until recent times. It seems that the mapping of the island continent was done at a time when it was ice free, i.e., when it was in a temperate zone before its crustal displacement.

10- Many ancient cities were laid out at 5 degree geographic locations of latitude and longitude based on the previous Hudson Bay pole location. It seems that an ancient civilization had taken the trouble to purposefully set up new cities according to some master plan. The frequency of these special sites suggests that it was not mere coincidence.

11- Graham Hancock in his Fingerprints Of the Gods, published in 1995, has shown that the Sphinx and the three great pyramids of Giza in Egypt have a relationship to the Zodiac and to the Belt of Orion that suggest a 10,000 BC date of origin. The weathering of the Sphinx, noted by John Anthony West, an independent Egyptologist, and Robert Schoch, a geologist at Boston University, strongly suggests that it was in existence during an extended wet period of history of thousands of years which places it before 5000 BC- well before the accepted date of 2500 BC. I.e., the evidence for an earlier civilization existing at a high technical level tells us that not only was there a catastrophic period that upset that civilization but it throws new light on the origins of our own civilization and its fantastic early monuments.

12- Albert Einstein's vigorous endorsement in 1958 of the work of Hapgood as providing brilliant insights into the physical evolution of the world is in itself a dynamic factor supporting the truth of the theory of crustal displacement.

To reinforce the startling but realistic concept of an earlier civilization, one that preceded the "flood", we have the evidence of the huge stones, the megaliths, that were used in construction in ancient Baalbek in Lebanon. Byblos on the Mediterranean in Lebanon was believed to be the oldest city in the world and the center of a society from which the Canaanites evolved. The related inland city of Baalbek later became the site of the Roman Temples of Jupiter and Bacchus. Six massive Corinthian columns remain in place in the ruins of the Temple of Jupiter. Supporting these columns and a former colonnade was a platform of which three massive quarried stones remain- each more than a 1000 tons. It is acknowledged that the platform is from an earlier period. It remains a mystery how anything so massive and heavy could have been quarried less than a mile away, carefully cut in pieces some 65 feet long and moved and set in place with extreme accuracy. Even today with our advanced technology we have our limits in handling 100 tons of satellite to be in position to be shot off into space at Cape Canaveral. Could it be that an earlier civilization had the know-how to move large stones?

Applying that phenomenon of huge, heavy, quarried stones to the issue at hand- the Temple Mount- it has been discovered that there is a stone in the foundation of the Western Wall that weighs over 600 tons. The usual suspects- the Canaanites, Jews, Assyrians, Babylonians and Romans have no history of construction of that magnitude. Scholars in Israel who have acknowledged the stone's existence simply turn away from the problem of how it got there. But since the Western Wall is attributed to Herod in the 1st century AD they are left with the unconvincing conclusion that somehow his regime must have put it there.

Let us pick up where we left off on Hapgood's crustal displacement theory. It was developed further by Rand Flem-Ath, a Canadian researcher, in conjunction with his wife Rose in his book When the Sky Fell published in 1995; and The Atlantis Blueprint published in 2000 in conjunction with Colin Wilson. He asks what movement happened to

those buildings that experienced massive destruction but managed to retain some of their foundations? What orientation would these foundations normally have had? Assuming that Hapgood is correct in his belief that key institutional buildings were around before 10,000 BC, and assuming that they were generally oriented to the four cardinal directions, the question Flem-Ath has asked is: Could those original locations and orientations have shifted as a result of the crustal displacement? This is the question we must apply to the Temple Mount.

Examination of satellite photos of the Temple Mount reveal that the orientation of the Western Wall, the Dome of the Rock and the Aqsa Mosque are all about ten degrees west of north. This indicates that the three components are part of an integrated scheme, planned at the same time. Since ancient principle structures were usually oriented to the four cardinal directions, it is unlikely that a 10 degree tilt was chosen. More likely, considering Flem-Ath's insight into building orientation due to crustal displacement, the Western Wall and the main buildings on the Temple Mount were originally faced to the North Pole but shifted when the North Pole moved 2000 miles south around 10,000 BC to Hudson Bay. This would also help explain how the 600 ton foundation stone got there- it was placed there by an earlier civilization that was capable of handling weights that even now are beyond our capabilities.

Since, according to Hapgood, the Earth's crust moved as a whole, we have a new analytic tool to enquire into the orientation of ancient buildings throughout the world and in all locations. The last movement of the crust was about 2000 miles and about about 5 degrees west of south. It pivoted, roughly, in Spain. The ten degree shift in Jerusalem became 15 degree east of north in Teotihuacan in Mexico, which explains why the Avenue of the Dead and the Temple of the Moon do not face due north. In fact, he notes that, in 1975, a leading world astroarchaeologist, Dr. Aveni F. Aveni , revealed that almost all of the major

archaeological sites in Meso-America are oriented east of true north. Flem-Ath points out that the ancient city of Medina Azahara in Andalusia, Spain orients about 20 degrees west of north; and the Temple of Jupiter in Baalbek orients approximately 14 degrees north of east. Assuming the Temple of Jupiter originally faced due east, then its shift of 14 degrees- not much more than the 10 degree shift of its neighbor the Temple at Jerusalem- is reasonable.

So what actually happened historically in ancient Israel? From the earliest developments of civilization in the Byblos/Baalbek area prior to the 10,000 BC crustal displacement, in what is now Lebanon in about 8000 BC there emerged the Canaanite civilization. It seems, according to some Israeli archaeologists, that the Israelites were a part of this civilization and that there is no evidence for the biblical belief expressed in the Exodus in the Old Testament that the Israelites, in their supposed flight from Egypt around 1600 BC, followed their God-given destiny. Some archaeologists in Israel say that there is no evidence for enslavement in Egypt. There was no great battle with the Canaanites. God did not bestow on the Israelites the gift of victory over the Canaanites. On the contrary, there was peaceful co-existence. Moreover, it is suggested that the Israelites were originally a tribe of Canaanites. In the north was the land of Israel or Samara. In the south, including Jerusalem, was Judah. In the south, by the 10th century BC, the age of David and Solomon, Judah was composed of small villages- hardly fertile ground for the erection of great palaces and temples. It was not until the 8th and 7th centuries BC that the two areas were consolidated and wealth and prosperity were achieved. The story of the Bible was an enhanced version of reality written in the 7th century BC by various writers in order to present a coherent and triumphalist face to the emerging and consolidated nation. In the 6th century BC the Babylonians destroyed the First Temple.

If the picture of Jerusalem as a great center of Judaism in the time of Solomon is a gross exaggeration, then what of the First Temple? The Temple existed. It was not a fiction of historians' imagination. The First Temple was a renewal of an existing Phoenician temple in the 10th century BC which was destroyed by the Babylonians in 586 BC. The Phoenician building complex on the Temple Mount was in itself essentially a renewal from the time of ancient Baalbek. Its footprint is a close match to the plan of the Roman Temple of Jupiter in Baalbek which was built on the foundations of an earlier pre-Canaanite complex. An overlay of the two plans shows how very similar they are in plan and scale. The identical, tilted, orientation of the Western Wall, the Dome of the Rock and the Aqsa Mosque shows that they were built before the 10th century BC, the time of the last crustal displacement. The 600 ton boulder in the foundation of the Western Wall shows the handiwork of an earlier civilization. What is now the Aqsa Mosque was then the pre-Canaanite temple; what is now the Dome of the Rock was part of the pre-Canaanite Temple and a shrine dedicated to earlier gods which became part of the First Temple. The Western Wall was not built by Herod in 19 AD but was part of the Temple Mount already in place by 10,000 BC.

The orientation of the Aqsa Mosque at 10 degrees to the west of north must be considered. If it was built de novo with the Dome of the Rock from 685 AD to 715 AD as is claimed by Islam and uniformly supported by mainstream scholarship, why doesn't it face Mecca which is at 157 degrees southeast from Jerusalem? The single most important requirement for a mosque, whether ancient or contemporary, is that the qibla wall, that incorporates the mihrab, face Mecca. Any mosque that does not do so has a lot of explaining to do. When Mohammad landed at the Temple Mount after his miraculous Night Flight from Mecca, he arrived with Gabriel at the Aqsa Mosque on the flying steed. He tethered the fantastic horse and together they ascended to Heaven to converse with God and the former prophets. The problem is that this occurred in 628 AD but the mosque was not built until some 60 years

later. The Koran is vague on the subject referring to the "most distant mosque". He ascended to heaven from Mount Moriah but there was no Dome of the Rock enveloping the sacred stone since it was not allegedly built until after the magical Night Flight. There may be a logical explanation. The Aqsa Mosque and the Dome of the Rock were indeed there as the Koran suggests but they were part of the ancient pre-Canaanite temple complex that had survived for 12,000 years. Islam renovated both but did not build them de novo. Before the Islamic conquest of Jerusalem the pre-Canaanite complex had been reworked as the First Temple in the 10th century BC and by Herod as the 2nd Temple in the 1st century AD.

Esthetic considerations reinforce the rejection of the alleged Islamic provenance of the Dome of the Rock. A comprehensive evaluation of Islamic architecture- those buildings that can be considered reliably Islamic- leads us to see their basic approach is not sculptural but show a strong tendency to fascadism. I.e., instead of composing buildings in the round the emphasis is usually on the front entry. Thus the sculptural approach of the Dome of the Rock shows a building with equal emphasis on all its eight sides. There is a unity and integrity to the building. However, this unity dissipates as one rises to the golden dome which seems rather abruptly placed on its drum without the sensitivity to transition displayed in the rest of the building. It seems that there is an Islamic dome on a pre-Islamic building. Renaissance depictions of the shrine show an earlier bulbous dome which seems more appropriate and probably expresses an original design. Sensitive proportions and elaborate and intricate geometric relationships and proportions of cupola, drum, piers, columns and ambulatories are not typical of the Islamic approach to architectural design. Their success with geometric forms in the service of decoration of ceramic tile and stucco is different from a sculptural and three-dimensional approach to architectural design.

A word, too, should be said about the total of 56 windows and blind recesses on the façade. The number 56 happens to coincide with the number of Aubrey stones in a circle in Stonehenge in England, erected about 2000 BC, which were probably used as a computer to predict eclipses of the moon. Study should be directed to the Dome of the Rock to see if there is some astronomical significance to its 56 unit fenestration.

The Aqsa Mosque has undergone many changes and rework so its original form is difficult to ascertain. Its basic rectangular shape with courtyard would be compatible with what the Bible tells us about the configuration of the Temple. The Bible tells us that the First Temple was erected with the vital aid of the Phoenicians, the successors to the Canaanites. The Temple had two large stone columns framing the entrance- which is also typical of Canaanite temples. And the “brazen sea”, a bronze fountain supported by twelve oxen in front of the entrance recalls the fountain at the courtyard of the Alhambra which has twelve lions supporting the basin but whose inspiration, undoubtedly, also came from Canaanite sources.

My answer to the mystery of the origins of the Temple Mount can be best summed up as follows: The pre-Canaanite Byblos/Baalbek culture had origins preceding 10,000 BC before the climax of the last great crustal displacement. The sacred peak of Mount Moriah was honored by a shrine built over it to which peoples from the Near East came to worship. The area surrounding the shrine was built up to become known later as the Temple Mount. A Baalbek-type temple was built as an extension of the shrine which was later transformed into a Canaanite Temple and reworked again to become the First Temple of the Jews, later the Second Temple. A western section of the Temple Mount retaining wall became the Wailing Wall. In the 7th c. AD the Muslims conquered Palestine from the Byzantines, rebuilt the shrine which became known as the Dome of the Rock, rebuilt the 2nd Jewish Temple and called it the Aqsa Mosque. The irony is that the Jews are forbidden

to worship on the Temple Mount since it is considered sacred to Islam. But the greater irony is that there are extremist Jews who would like to tear down the Dome of the Rock in order to put a Third Temple in its place. They would, of course, be tearing down their own building.

Marvin Mills
Sarasota, Florida
June 10, 2012