



The Gentiles ask to see Jesus.

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at this point that the Tyropæon valley, or the valley of cheeses, was deepest. There seems to be no doubt that it was by this, the grandest of all the approaches, that the Gentiles arrived who came to the Temple asking to see Jesus. From it, in the shade of the Naos Basilica and through the forest formed by the seventy-two columns, the outlines of all the buildings of the Temple would rise up before them, glowing in the midday sunlight. What has now become of these seventy-two Corinthian columns? After the taking of Jerusalem by Titus and the burning of the Temple, the cedar beams of the roof were consumed in the flames, whilst the columns fell and were most of them broken. It was the same with the four hundred other columns which upheld the roofs of the various courts. All these masses of stone and other debris remained where they had fallen, and, to drive away the Jews and the newly-made converts to Christianity, the Roman governors ordered all the filth and rubbish of the town to be thrown upon the ruins, so that a regular mountain soon rose up upon the site of the Temple. The Empress Helena, the mother of Constantine, was the first to begin to clear away the heaps of refuse; Justinian carried on her work and, for the building of the various sanctuaries which were now simultaneously erected in the Holy Land, the remains of the Temple were utilized. The best were reserved for the Basilica of the Nativity at Bethlehem and the Church of the Holy Sepulchre at Jerusalem, whilst that which later became the El-Aksa Mosque came next and was succeeded by others. This is why capitals exactly resembling each other are found alike in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and in the El-Aksa and Es-Sakhra Mosques, which are on what was once the esplanade of the Temple. The same workmanship can be recognized in all the remains, proving beyond a doubt the identity of their origin.

The strangers who came to the Temple to see Jesus were probably from Cyprus. Out of respect for the Master, they were not likely to address Him directly, but probably preferred their request through Philip.