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The Temple of Israel

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The events in the world today, when lined up against the very Word of God, gives evidence that Jesus coming again very soon. Let me illustrate.

Suppose day after day you commute to work and you pass an empty parcel of land along the way. Apparently, it seems as if this idle lot has been overlooked by developers and nothing will ever be built there. Then one day as you approach that spot you notice a huge sign has been erected stating that a new strip shopping center is coming soon. Around the edges of the lot little orange survey flags catch your eye. "How about that", you say to yourself, "someone is going to do something with that land after all." A week later as you drive by you see powerful bulldozers grading the land in preparation for construction. Then, within eight months, the grand opening of the new shopping center takes place. Preceding the huge sign, though, were many behind the scenes activities. Buyer and seller negotiations, financing arrangements, architect's drawings, pre-leasing activities, construction contracts and permits and related activity were all occurring. Thus, the on site construction was only the final outward evidence that preparations for the building had already been in the works for some time.

So it is with one of the greatest evidences of the soon coming of the Lord Jesus Christ - the rebuilt Jewish Temple in Jerusalem. This Temple, complete with its sacrificial system, will come on the scene in Jerusalem rather suddenly. Its appearance will signal that we are on the verge of the Antichrist's reign of terror (the time of the "great tribulation"; Matt.24:15, 21), which is just precedent to the bodily return of Jesus Christ to earth. This article will examine the compelling proof that preparations for a rebuilt Temple are well underway. Those with insight will see that these activities are not fortuitous or coincidental. God is orchestrating these events in order to fulfill His Word and bring human history as we know it to a conclusion.

Let us first look at Scriptures that tell us of a reconstructed Temple at the end of this age. Interestingly, Jesus begins His famous prophecies of the end time in Matthew 24 with a discussion centered on King Herod's elaborate Temple complex. Jesus prophesied that this Temple would be utterly destroyed. That prediction was fulfilled in 70 A. D., when Roman armies invaded Jerusalem. But Jesus also predicted the existence of another, future Temple when He stated, "Therefore, when you see the 'abomination of desolation' spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place... " (Matt. 24:15) The "holy place" refers to the Temple. The abomination Jesus spoke of in the Temple is an idol set up there with the image of the Antichrist (Dan. 9:27; 11:31; 12:11; Rev. 13:14-15). Also, the Antichrist himself enters this future sanctuary and declares himself to be God (2 Thess. 2:4). For such a desecration to take place there must be such a sanctuary, once again established on the historical Temple Mount in

Jerusalem, the only place where Mosaic law would permit such a structure (Deut. 12:5-7; 1 Chron. 21:22, 25-28; 22:1-2; 2 Chron. 6:5-7).

The Bible indicates that the sacrificial system is reinstated as a part of a seven-year agreement which embraces the final seven-years of this age: "Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week; but in the middle of the week he shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering." (Dan.9:27) According to the book of Daniel, the total time frame for both the reinstated Temple sacrifices and the period of Temple desecration covers about 6.4 years: "Then I heard a holy one speaking; and another holy one said to that certain one who was speaking, 'How long will the vision be, concerning the daily sacrifices and the transgression of desolation, the giving of both the sanctuary and the host to be trampled underfoot?' And he said to me, 'For two thousand three hundred days; then the sanctuary shall be cleansed.'" (Dan. 8:13-14) The cleansing of the Temple occurs when the Messiah (Jesus Christ) comes at the end of this seven-year period.

So, when this landmark seven-year "covenant" is reached that allows for Israel to again have a sacrificial Temple system on the Temple Mount, it appears that they are able to put such a sanctuary in place rather quickly, only about seven months after the seven-year clock begins ticking. This fully functioning sanctuary is the equivalent of the shopping center that suddenly comes on the scene in our illustration. And the sign announcing the coming shopping center is equivalent to the signing of the seven-year agreement allowing for the Temple to be built. Now let's look at the indicators that show us preparations are currently being made to rebuild this Temple and thus set the stage for the return of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Fervor Among the Jews for a New Temple

In order for the Temple to be rebuilt, the Jews must have a strong desire to do so. This fervor had its outward manifestation in 1973 when some of the religious Jews began to plan for a temple on the Temple Mount (in spite of the fact that this site was then, and is now, under the control of Muslims who would never agree to such a temple). Several Jewish organizations in Israel are today actively praying and planning for this Temple.

One such organization, The Institute for Talmudic Commentaries, has published twenty-five textbooks dealing with issues related to this coming Temple. Another group, The Temple Mount and Land of Israel Faithful, is eager to rebuild and has even attempted to place a cornerstone for such a Temple on the Temple Mount (they were stopped from doing this so that a riot would not occur). This fervor will spread to other Jews if significant ancient temple items are found (more will be said about this later). Also, the Bible predicts wars in Israel's future. Supernatural deliverance of Israel by God in such wars, such as that predicted in Ezek. 38:21-23, will certainly provoke many more Jews worldwide to be zealous to carry out God's commandments regarding sacrificial worship in the Temple.

The Priesthood

There were specific requirements in the Law for the priesthood. To properly train such a priesthood according to all the details of the Law would take much research and effort. Amazingly, such a priesthood already exists and is ready to serve! A good number of Israelis of the proper priestly bloodlines have already been schooled in several "yeshivas" (schools) that were established, among other reasons, for the training of Temple priests. The Institute for Talmudic Commentaries is developing and maintaining a data base of eligible priests for service in the coming Temple. Additionally, Biblical priestly garments have been woven by the Temple Institute, an organization dedicated to seeing Temple worship reestablished.

The Temple Furniture and Implements

The Temple Institute spent many years in researching Temple implements, vessels and furniture. They have now reproduced most of the items needed for actual temple use. It is very possible that some of the vessels and furniture that have not yet been reproduced could be found.

In 1952 archaeologists discovered a copper scroll in one of the caves at Qumran (the site of the Dead Sea scroll discoveries). Upon translation and interpretation of this mysterious scroll, scholars concluded that it contained a list of 64 places where Temple treasures were hidden in anticipation of the fall of Jerusalem in 70 A. D. The ancient terminology of this scroll regarding the sites is somewhat difficult to understand today. Nevertheless, efforts are currently underway to discover these sites using modern technology. It is indeed possible, perhaps likely, that tremendous finds of Temple items could occur in the future at a timely moment planned by God. Included in such finds could be specially marked vessels containing the ashes of the red heifer sacrifice, which are needed for the water of purification by which the priests, the Temple site and Temple instruments could be ceremonially purified for service (see Numbers 19). We would here reiterate that the discovery of such items would give tremendous impetus to the global Jewish community to rebuild the Temple required by their sacred Torah (the five books of the Law). It is probable that such a discovery would be seen by them as a sign from God that they should proceed with all diligence and dispatch to reestablish Biblical Temple worship.

The Ark of the Covenant

The most important Temple item is the Ark of the Covenant, which was located in the innermost sanctum of the Temple, the Holy of Holies. The rabbis in Israel do not seem fretful about locating this Ark. In fact, they seem to be certain that its acquisition is not a problem at all, either because they already know of its location or because they believe it will providentially be found at a crucial moment in time. Former Chief Rabbi of Israel, Shlomo Goren (now deceased), along with Rabbi Getz, former Rabbi of the Western Wall (also now deceased), both believed quite strongly that the Ark rests in a special chamber under the Temple Mount that was built for that purpose. Some sources say that Goren and



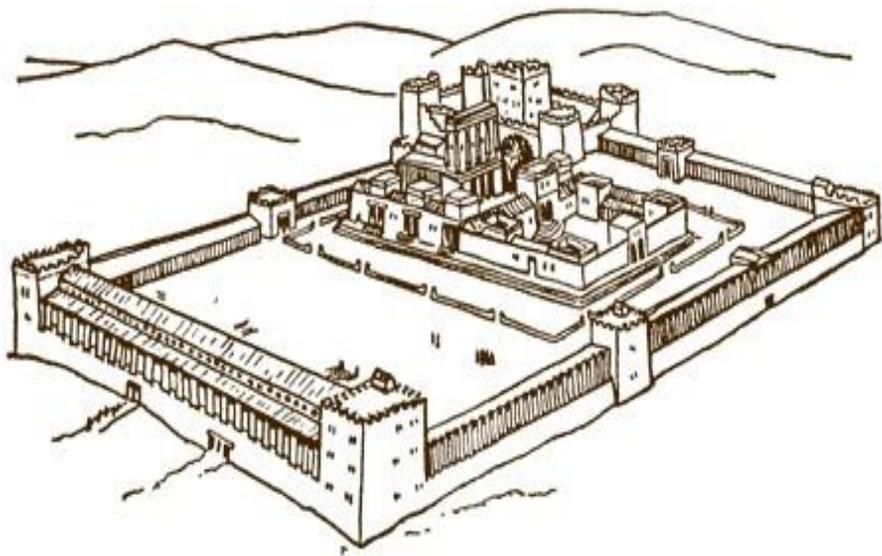
Getz had proof positive (eye witness accounts) of the Ark in this chamber. Once the Jews regain the control of the Temple Mount, they would then have a free hand to explore the many passageways and chambers that lie in the huge rock mass beneath the Temple Mount. In His sovereign coordination of the Temple preparations God has not overlooked anything. There is a young couple in Israel who have researched the harps used by those serving in the Temple worship. These magnificent harps are now being reproduced by craftsmen employed by the couple. This couple feels confident that an ample supply of these Biblical harps will be ready when Temple worship begins again.

It is important to realize that the physical preparations for the priesthood and the Temple items are mostly complete. These preparations have taken a number of years, but now things are almost ready. This is similar to the background preparations that took place before the sign went up in our illustration. The discovery of a few additional, significant items could take place at any moment. We should see that God has planned this preparation; it is not accidental.

In the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy, the return of the Jews to the land was a great feature. This was accomplished by God's hand and the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948 was a miracle wrought by God. Then, starting over two decades ago, God began working in the hearts of a minority of His chosen Jewish people to desire to work toward a rebuilt Temple. This zealous remnant has now completed most of the preparation work related to the priesthood and the Temple service. Now we need only to look at two last items God will need to bring a new Temple onto the world scene: a Temple structure and a Temple site.

The Temple Structure

Any structure erected on the Temple Mount by the Jews for sacrificial worship must be constructed according to God's divinely revealed pattern (Ex.26:30; 1 Chron. 28:11-12). Therefore, it would seem that the Jews must carefully research and reproduce such a structure in exacting detail. Although I have been unable to confirm it, no doubt there are some plans, perhaps even materials, being prepared for this building. As seen earlier, this structure will be erected in a very short time, as sacrifices will begin there within about seven months time after the signing of the seven-year covenant.



Such a speedy development and erection of this edifice seems to be a tremendous challenge. However, I believe it is altogether possible that God has a surprise in store that will make the task relatively easy. The original tabernacle constructed by Moses for worship in the wilderness may again come into service! The Bible reveals that this portable tabernacle was brought to Solomon's temple along with the Ark (1 Kings 8:4). In the Rabbinical writing known as the Babylonian Talmud, it is stated that the tabernacle was stored in a subterranean chamber directly beneath the Holy of Holies. Subterranean chambers below the Temple Mount were probably the "treasuries", or storehouses, that belonged to the Temple (1 Chron. 28:11-12). Once again there is the exciting prospect that God may suddenly uncover long lost Biblical objects. Such a discovery would only confirm God's hand in this project to the Jews, and would fuel their zealously to worship Him in the Temple according to the Torah.

The Temple Site

The Temple Mount in Jerusalem is the most contentious piece of real estate in the world today.



This is due to the spiritual battle in the unseen realm. This site was under that part of Jerusalem subject to Jordanian control from 1948 until the Six Day War in 1967. Upon its recapture in 1967 Rabbi Shlomo Goren began to map the area and lay plans for a Jewish presence there. However, Defense Minister Moshe Dayan, who was fearful of the provocation such a presence would create in the Arab world, gave the authority over the Mount to the Wakf. The Wakf is the Supreme Moslem Council that superintends Islamic holy sites. The Dome of the Rock, the third most holy Moslem shrine, is located on the Temple Mount,

along with the Moslem Al-Aqsa Mosque. Therefore, the sacred site of the Temple is not in Jewish hands.

Even if the Temple Mount were under Israeli control, there is yet another problem connected with the site that we should touch upon. There is disagreement concerning exactly where on the Temple Mount the first and second Temples stood. Until fairly recently, most scholars assumed that the Temples stood where the Dome of the Rock now is, in the center of the Mount. The Dome of the Rock is a shrine erected over the highest point of the Mount. This shrine simply houses a natural rock mass, and it was presumed that this prominent mass was the location of the Temple. If this theory is correct then one of Islam's most holy shrines must be removed in order to rebuild the Temple. Obviously, this would be an immense problem.

However, there are two other hypotheses concerning the Temple location. One site is to the north of the Dome of the Rock. This theory has been proposed by physicist Dr. Asher Kaufman and it contains some intriguing proofs. Another explanation places the location to the south of the Dome of the Rock. The determination of the proper site will probably not come until the Mount

is under Jewish control, allowing physical examination including probes beneath the Mount surface. Given the seven-month time frame from the permission to rebuild until sacrifices begin, it is certainly possible that this problem can be solved within this amount of time, especially when one considers that the Tabernacle could be erected in about three days.

War Ahead?

But how can the Temple Mount, now controlled by the Moslems and containing two Moslem religious structures, ever be given over to the Jews to rebuild their Temple? This will happen as a result of the very significant seven-year covenant. Yet, what possible event could give impetus to such a monumental agreement that would permit the Jews to reinstitute the complete Temple system? History teaches us that significant agreements that change jurisdictions often arise as settlements to war. It is unlikely that the Mid-East "peace process" will ever succeed in solving the thorny issue of Jerusalem, or that the Moslems would agree to a Jewish Temple through peaceful negotiations. Those who really understand the dynamics of the Palestinian/Israeli problem recognize the grim reality that war is inevitable. The fundamentalist Moslem element will never be satisfied until the Jews are pushed entirely off the real estate there. This is in accordance with their theology which deems that any area conquered by them has been permanently given to them by Allah. To be faithful to this tenet, they must regain the entire area of Israel, which was part of the Moslem Ottoman Empire for four centuries until 1917.

Yes, it is highly probable that one or more wars lie ahead in order to put the seven-year covenant into effect. This should not be surprising in light of the sudden wars that have already occurred in modern Israel's brief history. The Bible clearly records that Israel's neighbors conspire together to demolish the Jewish nation (see Ps.83:1-8).

Understanding exactly when, or in what order, ancient prophecies will be fulfilled is difficult. Nevertheless, in light of probable Mid-Eastern war, the Bible student should look carefully at least two unfulfilled predictions of war. Isaiah 17 prophesies the sudden destruction of Damascus (in Syria) and the "cities of Aroer" (v.2), which refers to Jordan. It seems that Israel may be the cause of this destruction (a preemptive strike?), and thus falls into disfavor in world opinion (v.4). Another war on the horizon is the attack upon Israel by Gog (a Russian leader) and his predominantly Moslem allies (Ez.38:1-39:24). The countries identified in Ez. 38:5, 6 include Iran, Afghanistan, Libya, Turkey, Ethiopia, Sudan and possibly Iraq and others. However, it is interesting to note that Syria and Jordan are not named in this confederacy, perhaps because they are already disabled or taken over by Israel (Is. 17). God supernaturally delivers Israel from this invasion (Ez.38: 18-23).

Great conflict lies ahead in the Middle East and it could come suddenly upon the scene. One such war will probably result in the seven-year agreement that will bring the Temple Mount under Israel's control.

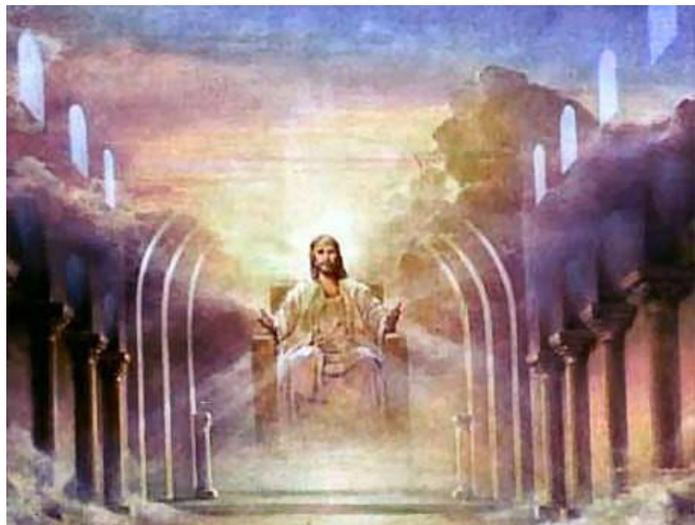
Are You Ready?

Preparations for the coming Temple are well underway. All of this activity points to the nearness of Christ's return. The question is: are you ready for His coming? The Bible tells us that when He returns He will judge the world. Eventually, every person will have to stand before God's holy throne to be judged. Your eternal destiny will be decided. Imagine yourself there before God. All of your words, thoughts and actions are being brought to light and weighed against God's holy standards. No one can pass this examination. God's Word tells us that "there is none righteousness, not even one" (Rom. 3:10). How will you answer God? Do you want to be there without having accepted God's only provision for the forgiveness of sin -- the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ? The Bible warns us that "whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath abides upon him." (Jn. 3:36)

God is merciful, however, and does not want you to suffer His wrath. Jesus suffered the punishment for your sins on the cross and rose again that you might be forgiven and have eternal life. "For Christ died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, in order that He might bring us to God." (1 Pet. 3:18) "In Him [Jesus] we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins." (Eph.1:7) Salvation is a free gift offered to you by God: "For by grace you have been saved through faith; ...it is the gift of God." (Eph. 2:8) You simply need to receive this gift through faith by believing, trusting in Christ as your Savior. "Believe in [trust, rely upon and depend upon] the Lord Jesus and you shall be saved." (Acts 16:31) You may express your decision in prayer: "Lord Jesus, thank you for dying for my sins. I trust in you for forgiveness and accept you as my Savior."

Christ's Judgment Seat

But perhaps you have already trusted in the Lord Jesus for your eternal salvation. If so, then this salvation is eternally secure (Jn. 6:39-40; 10:27-29) and you will not be judged in the future as respects it (Jn. 5:24). Our eternal future with God, then, is not based upon works but it is based upon the principle of salvation by grace through faith (Eph.2:8-9). On the other hand, the future day of judgment will include a judgment upon believers that is based upon the principle of reward, or recompense, according to works (2 Cor.5:10; Matt. 16:27; Rom. 2:6; Rev. 22:12). Christians will have to give an account to God of their deeds (those deeds done since conversion) and have these deeds judged. "For we all must appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad." (2 Cor.5:10) This judgment will be righteous and impartial. Christ will recompense believers according to their



works, that is, whether the works are good or bad (2 Cor. 5:10; Eph. 6:5-8; Col. 3:23-25) This means that Christ's judgment upon believers can take on a positive or a negative nature. If our works are fleshly, we may "suffer loss" but still be eternally "saved, yet so as through fire." (1 Cor. 3:15)

Jesus' parables in Matt. 25:14-30 and Lk.19:12-26 speak of this coming judgment upon His servants (believers) at His return. These and other passages indicate this judgment primarily affects our status in the coming 1,000 year Kingdom of Christ. These parables tell us that if we have been faithful stewards with our spiritual gifts, then we will be given responsibility and experience joy in the coming 1,000 year Kingdom of Christ (Matt. 25:21, 23; Lk. 19:17, 19). On the other hand, if we neglect our spiritual gifts, our opportunity for responsibility will be taken away and we will experience weeping and regret (Matt. 25:29-30; Lk. 19:24-26). If we ignore the Lord's coming and live in worldly pleasure, Christ will chastise us upon His return (Matt. 24:48-51; Lk. 12:45-46). Therefore, we should be watchful for the Lord's return and be diligent to be ready (Matt. 24:42-44). Our preparation should include our confession of specific sins now so that any unrighteousness can be cleansed from us before we arrive at Christ's Judgment Seat (1 Jn.1:9). Sins that have been confessed will not be subject to Christ's judgment at that time. By the power of God's indwelling grace, we should live in holiness and service to Him until He comes (2 Pet. 3:11-15; Lk. 19:13).

Sources used in the preparation of this article:

Books:

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"In Search of Temple Treasures" by Dr. Randall Price

"Messiah" by Grant R. Jeffrey **Videos:**

"Ready to Rebuild" by Jimmy De Young

"Temple of the Lost Ark" by Mart De Hann and Jimmy De Young



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