

THE TEMPLE

November 21, 2014

Part I

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INTRODUCTION

During our previous series on Israel, some interest was directed towards the Temple Mount and its relevance to Israel, Arabic countries, and prophecy. Due to current world events, the continued isolation of Israel, the global growth of the Arabic peoples, the desire of Arabs to control the Land of Israel and the Temple Mount, and a renewed interest in The Last Days, it seems as though this generation is watching world events unfold unlike any other prior generation. Consequently, it seems like a natural progression to continue with our discussion of the *Land of Israel* and overview the history of the Temples, the Temple Mount in Jerusalem, and the time that the Bible specifically delineates that a third Temple will be constructed in Jerusalem prior to the mid-point of the Tribulation, and then be desecrated by the Antichrist.

With these thoughts in mind, let's begin this series by specifically looking at the history of the Tabernacle, the Jewish Temples, and then focus on the importance of the Temple Mount future. As most students of Bible prophecy are well aware, biblical scripture indicates a Temple will be built to re-institute the Jewish sacrificial system and prepare for the coming of the Messiah. However, the existing potential inflammatory tensions between Jews and Arabs over the Temple Mount area currently make the construction of a Jewish Temple on the Temple Mount seem an impossibility. Additionally, we will discuss what the religious Jewish leaders have been accomplishing to restore the Temple and the sacrificial system. Another item of extreme interest we will briefly discuss is

the "Ark of the Covenant" and its place in End Times. However, it must be remembered that there has been a significant amount of conjecture regarding its location and possibly even its existence.

THE TEMPLE(S)

PURPOSE

According to the revered rabbi Moses Maimonides, the purpose of the Temple was two-fold:

- The divine presence of God was revealed to mankind (the Glory of God dwelt above the Mercy Seat of the Ark of the Covenant)
- Provided a selected place for offering divine sacrifices

HISTORY

The word *temple* is derived from the Hebrew word *hekal*. In the Bible, Temple normally refers to the Jerusalem Temple or a Temple in Jerusalem. From a practical perspective, the Bible refers to one portable temple (Tabernacle) and *four* distinct stationary Temples in Jerusalem and an eternal Temple. Let's look at each one in detail.

THE TABERNACLE

The Tabernacle was a *mobile* Temple that was used by the children of Israel while they were in the wilderness. The word Tabernacle means "sanctuary"



Figure 1. The Tabernacle of Moses

or "place of dwelling" and was a sacred place of meeting between God and His people during the Israelites 40 years of wandering in the desert under the leadership of Moses. The Tabernacle was constructed in the desert wilderness one year after the Israelites completed their Exodus from Egypt (about 1450 B.C.) and was constructed from specific instructions from God to Moses. The Tabernacle was a mobile tent surrounded by a perimeter of linen walls (outer court). The exterior perimeter dimensions were 75-feet wide, 150-feet long, and was surrounded by a linen fence 7.5-feet high supported by 60 pillars. The outer courtyard could only be entered through the Gate Of The Courts. Although the complete story of God's direction to Moses regarding the Tabernacle begins in Exodus 25:1, the specifics of the Tabernacle construction and its many facets begin in Exodus 25:9.

As directed by God, the Tabernacle would travel with the Israelites to wherever they pitched camp, would always be the center of their camp, and would be surrounded by the tents of the 12 tribes of Israel placed according to

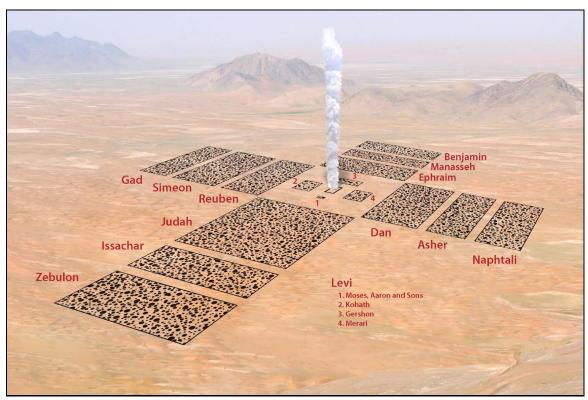


Figure 2. The placement of the Tabernacle and tribes of Israel appeared as a cross when viewed from above

each tribe. According to Numbers 2:2 "Everyone of the children of Israel shall camp by his own standard (flag or banner), beside the emblems of his fathers house; they shall

camp some distance from the tabernacle of meeting" followed by verses 3-54 that gives specific instructions for tribal placements around the Tabernacle. As a major point of interest, because God directed the placement of the tribes in relation to North, South, West, and East around the Tabernacle, the overall image would have appeared as a cross (with the Tabernacle at the junction of the horizontal and vertical elements) when viewed from above (Figure 2). This is readily apparent when considering the number of people in tribal placement as follows:

- o Ephraim, Benjamin, Manasseh 108,100
- o Reuben, Simeon, Gad 151, 450
- o Dan, Asher, Naphtali 157,600
- o Judah, Issachar, Zebulun 186,400
- o The Levite tribe positioned around the Tabernacle consisted of 22,000 males. Therefore, the actual number of the Levite tribe would have been much higher with women and children. Numbers 1:53 indicates that the purpose of setting the Levites apart and arranging them around the Tabernacle was to (1) keep the wrath of the Lord from consuming Israel and (2) to keep charge of the Tabernacle.

Additionally, and as a visual image, God appeared as a pillar of smoke over the Tabernacle by day and a pillar of fire by night over the Tabernacle. The Israelite people would not move their location unless the pillar of smoke/fire moved thus making an unmistakable and visual statement indicating the presence of God *within* His people.

An illustration of God and the Tabernacle appears in the New Testament in John 1:14 that says "The word became flesh and made His dwelling among us." The word dwelling in the New Testament is the same word as Tabernacle in the Old Testament. So, God came in living flesh to dwell (or Tabernacle) among His people. As applied to His 33 years on this earth, Jesus Christ fulfilled the picture of the Old Testament Tabernacle. The Tabernacle was also a prophetic version of the Lord's redemptive plan for his people and mankind. Also, remember that using a pillar of smoke/fire to guide the Israelite people was not limited to guiding the Israelite people in the desert for 40 years. God also used a pillar of smoke/fire in:

- The Exodus and protection from the advancing Egyptians Exodus 13 and 14
- When Moses entered the Tabernacle Exodus 33:9-10
- o Miriam, Aaron, and Moses by the Tabernacle Numbers 12:5
- Moses intercedes for the people Numbers 14:14
- o The inauguration of Joshua Deuteronomy 31:15
- The time in Sinai remembered Nehemiah 9:12&19

o Remembrance of the Lord's divine direction – Psalms 99:7

THE FIRST TEMPLE

After the Israelites entered the Promised Land and David became king, God discussed a new stationary Temple with David but did not allow him to build it because he was a man of war and had shed blood (I Chronicles 28:3). Although God allowed David to begin collecting the necessary materials for construction, the *first* Temple was actually built by King Solomon around 1,000 B.C. on the Temple Mount and ultimately destroyed by the Babylonians 400 years later in 586 B.C. The First Temple complex was significantly larger than the Tabernacle and the construction details are found in I Kings 6. King Solomon spared no expense in building the Temple (Figure 3) as evidenced by the fact that he overlaid the entire inner sanctuary of the Temple with pure gold (I Kings 6:20).

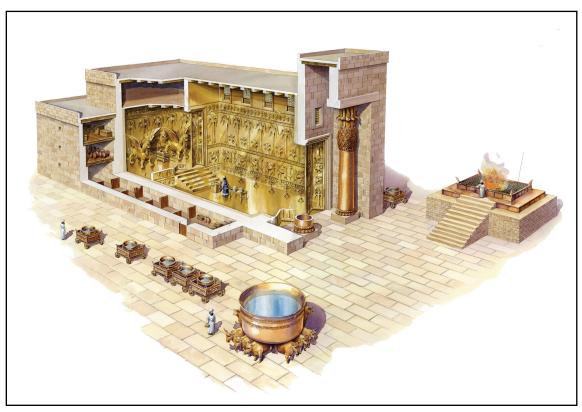


Figure 3. The *first* Temple constructed by King Solomon

King Solomon also sustained other expenses to the point of incurring a significant debt that resulted in the necessity of repaying King Hiram with 20 towns in Galilee (I Kings 8:43). Following is a brief financial example of the amount of gold and silver used in its construction:

o 3,000 tons of gold valued at a modern price of \$1340 per ounce = \$128 billion

- o 30,000 tons of silver with a current value of \$26 billion
- o Josephus records that the Temple's walls and floors were covered in gold as well as numerous items that were made from solid pure gold

After the new Temple was consecrated, the visible presence of God moved from the Tabernacle to the new Temple (I Kings 8:10). This was accomplished by moving the Ark of the Covenant into the Holy of Holies where the Shekinah Glory of God was visibly displayed above the Mercy Seat of the Ark (pillar of smoke). To describe the numerous highlights of King Solomon's Temple would go far beyond the boundaries of this discussion. However, let's briefly look at four features that are noteworthy from the perspective of the level of intelligence that was possessed during that time in history – regardless of secular beliefs regarding ancient mankind:

Metallurgy

I Kings 7:15-26 and 2 Chronicles 4:2-6 detail specific bronze articles made for the Temple. In the account, Hiram of Tyre "had the skill and knowledge to make all kinds of works of bronze," and cast the following items (Figure 3):

- o Two pillars of 55 tons each
- Two caps at 20 tons each
- o A laver at 13 tons
- The Great Molten Sea that weighed 72 tons
- o Twelve oxen to support the Great Molten Sea
- Various ornaments

Of particular interest, the Great Molten Sea was located in the southeastern corner of the inner court, and was 7.5-feet high, 15-feet in diameter from brim to brim, and 45-feet in circumference. The underneath portion of the brim was decorated with 2 rows of gourds. It was placed on the backs of twelve oxen in four groups of three that were standing with their faces outward (3 facing east, 3 facing west, and so on). Additionally, the Great Molten Sea held approximately 15,000 gallons of water that was used for the priests to wash themselves before entering the Temple! The pillars and the Great Molten Sea were cast of bright bronze (primarily copper and zinc) and *uniform* in color that indicates they required a single casting or pouring per article to achieve the necessary clarity instead of visible layers between numerous castings.

Additionally, consider how Hiram built a foundry in the desert that was capable of smelting 72 tons of uniform bronze for a single casting (along with all of the other items) and then being able to transport the Great Molten Sea to Solomon's Temple. After the fall of Jerusalem in 587 BC, The Great Molten Sea

was later destroyed by the Chaldeans and taken to Babylon (2 Kings 25:13, Jeremiah 52:17).

Water For The Great Molten Sea And Temple

Solomon knew that an abnormally large amount of water would be needed to cleanse the Temple area from the blood of sacrificed animals and for the Great Molten Sea (as an example, I Kings 8 indicates that on the first day of the dedication of the First Temple, Solomon sacrificed 120,000 sheep and 22,000 oxen). Initially, water for the Great Molten Sea was supplied by the Gibeonites, but was later supplied by a conduit that began in the Hebron mountains east of Jerusalem, passed through Solomon's Pools at Elam (which are still there), and flowed to Jerusalem.

To achieve this water transport, a special aqueduct had to be constructed. Portions of the stone aqueduct were sealed to be able to create a siphon effect to be able to traverse water down into valleys and back up again to the end location of the Temple in Jerusalem.

Advanced Masonry

Although it is well known in archaeology that the Egyptians were capable of moving and cutting large blocks of granite for the Pyramids that maintained a tolerance of .10-inch, Dr. Grant R. Jeffrey personally states in his excellent book - The New Temple and the Second Coming - that some of the foundation stones for the First Temple "weigh up to 1,000 tons and are fitted together so perfectly that it is impossible to place even a razor blade between them. Modern machinery, including cranes and helicopters, would be unable to transport these stones the one-mile distance from the quarry where they were excavated to their ultimate location, sixty-five feet beneath the current surface of the Temple Mount." Evidently the Temple artisans had access to the same technology of the Egyptians.

Mathematics

The dimensions of the Great Molten Sea are worth mentioning from the perspective of the history of Pi. When assessing the dimensions, it becomes apparent when the circumference is divided by the diameter, the result is Pi that math students know is 3.14159265358979. History records that Archimedes discovered Pi around 250 B.C., yet Solomon built the Great Molten Sea in 1,000 B.C., long before the Greeks rediscovered Pi. This is a possibility why some scholars have referred to this Temple as the "house of Pi."

THE SECOND TEMPLE

The *second* Temple was initially built by the Jews after returning from their Babylonian captivity to Jerusalem in 536 B.C. and was a modest version of the first Temple. This Temple followed the outline of Solomon's Temple but was later enlarged (and significantly enhanced) by King Herod in 18 B.C. and then

totally destroyed in 70 A.D. by the Romans. During its construction (started in 20 BC and lasting for 46 years), the area of the Temple Mount was raised, doubled and surrounded by a wall with gates. The Temple itself was raised, enlarged, and faced with white stone (in addition to significant interior enhancements). It is believed the renovation by King Herod resulted in the Temple being regarded as one of the great marvels of the ancient world (Figure 4). Of particular interest is the fulfillment of Matthew 24:2 where Jesus stated "not one stone here shall be left upon another that shall not be thrown down." When the Romans burned Jerusalem and the Temple, the gold overlay and figurines on the walls/ceiling melted and ran between the seams of the stones, resulting in the Romans tearing the stones apart to recover the gold and fulfilling the prophecy in Matthew 24.



Figure 4. The renovated *second* Temple by King Herod

THE THIRD TEMPLE

The *third* Temple is often referred to as the "Tribulation Temple" and/or the "Antichrist's Temple" as there will be a Jewish Temple at least by the midpoint of the Tribulation and is supported by Daniel 9:27, Matthew 24:15, 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4, and Revelation 11:1-2. These scriptures can be summarized by the fact that the Antichrist will defile the Temple at the mid-point (3.5 years) of the Tribulation. Although the Bible does not specifically describe what happens to the Third Temple, it will be removed/replaced/eliminated as part of

the widespread topographical changes that will prepare Jerusalem for the Millennial Temple (Zechariah 14:10 & Isaiah 2:2).

Of particular interest to prophecy enthusiasts, the Bible does not clearly define if the Tribulation Temple will be built before or during the beginning of the Great Tribulation, however this item of interest is mentioned in four scriptural passages as follows:

- o Daniel 9:27, 11:31, and 12:11
- Matthew 24:15 and Mark 13:14
- o 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4
- o Revelation 11:1-2, and 13:15

THE FOURTH TEMPLE

At the second coming of Christ, significant topographical changes will occur in Jerusalem to accommodate the immense Millennial Temple (Zechariah 14:4). Jerusalem and the surrounding area will be elevated in preparation for the key role of Israel during the Messiah's Millennial rule (Zechariah 14:9-11). Ezekiel 47:13-48:35 further describe the topographical changes in Israel that are designed to accompany Israel's new dominance over the nations.

Once the aforementioned topographical changes are completed, a *fourth* Temple – also known as the Millennial Temple – will be constructed by Christ (Zechariah 6:11-13) at the beginning of the Messianic Kingdom (Ezekiel 37:26-28). It will serve as the center of worship for the world during the Millennium (Micah 4:1-3 and Isaiah 2:2-4) where Christ will reign as both King and Priest, and will be much greater than the previous three Temples. As an example, the Temple will be one mile square and will likely be the most magnificent building in human history (see Ezekiel 40-48 for details). This Temple will also host the resumption of animal sacrifices, the festival worship schedule, and will be built north of Jerusalem. Animal sacrifices will follow other biblical prophetic predictions where the Millennial Temple will include a priesthood and sacrifices (Isaiah 56:7, 60:7, Jeremiah 33:18, and Zechariah 14:16-21). Ending the Last Days, the Millennial Temple will be attacked by Satan and his army, and will be removed at the time of the creation of the new earth (Isaiah 65:17, 66:22, 2 Peter 3:12-13, and Revelation 21:1).



Figure 5. The *fourth* Temple, also known as the Millennial Temple

THE ETERNAL TEMPLE

From a scriptural perspective, there will be a *fifth* Temple referred to as the Eternal Temple that will occupy the New Jerusalem throughout the balance of eternity (Revelation 21:2 and 10). It should be remembered that all saints - who will be with Christ in eternity and who will also be in resurrected bodies devoid of sin - will have no need for a physical structure (Revelation 21:3). Therefore, John declares in Revelation that "he saw no temple there" (Revelation 21:22a). However, John is quick to add that "for the Lord God, the Almighty, and the Lamb, are its Temple" (Revelation 21:22b). This Temple will be comprised of God Himself and as a result, the saints will endlessly fulfill their function as priests, serving God (Revelation 7:15) in the New Jerusalem that will also be the Holy of Holies.

Part II with accompanying notes is scheduled to air on December 11, 2014

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THE TEMPLE MOUNT

December 11, 2014

Part II

Perry Atkinson and John Mittendorf

INTRODUCTION

During Part I on November 21, 2014, we discussed the significance of the Jewish Tabernacle, and the five Jewish Temples that are delineated in biblical scripture as follows:

- o First Temple Solomon's Temple
- Second Temple Rebuilt Temple by King Herod
- Third Temple Tribulation/Antichrist Temple
- o Fourth Temple Millennial Temple
- o Fifth Temple Eternal Temple

Let's continue that discussion and focus our attention on the Temple Mount and its place in past, present, and future history.

THE TEMPLE MOUNT

The 35-acre Temple Mount is without a doubt, the most controversial piece of real estate in the world (Figure 1). Since the Six-Day War of 1967 when the Israeli Defense Forces recaptured Jerusalem and specifically the Temple Mount, Israel had – for the first time in thousands of years – controlled the city of Jerusalem and the Temple Mount area. However, Israel allowed the Supreme Muslim Religious Council (a Jordanian controlled Muslim trust referred to as *Waqf*) to control religious activities and police all activities for the Temple Mount. This was a result of Israeli Defense Minister General Moshe Dayan establishing this policy (in the interest of peace) with Muslim leaders at the conclusion of the 1967 war. However, it still remains in effect today but was viewed by the

Muslims as a sign of Israeli weakness. Presently, this policy has also resulted in Muslims supervising much of the Temple Mount along with the inability of Israel to readily excavate under the Temple Mount for historical purposes.

MOSQUES AND SHRINES

For this discussion, there are four primary structures that occupy this piece of land. All are revered Muslim holy sites (Refer to Figures 1&2. *North is at the top in both figures*):



Figure 1. The Temple Mount

Dome of the Rock

A shrine that was built by the Islamic Calif-Abdal-Malik between 689 and 691 AD. It was *believed* to have been (1) built on the site of the Second Jewish Temple, (2) over a sacred stone which is the place from which the Prophet Muhammad ascended into heaven during his night journey to heaven, (3) believed by Jews to be over the place where Abraham prepared to sacrifice Isaac, (4) and also believed by the Jews to be directly over the site of the Holy of Holies of both Solomon's and Herod's Temple. In 1993, the dome was refurbished in gold that gives the dome its characteristic "golden appearance" and is easily visible in Jerusalem and surrounding areas

Al-Aqsa Mosque

Also known as the Noble Sanctuary, the Al-Aqsa Mosque was constructed after the completion of the Dome of the Rock and completed in 705 AD. Muslims believe that Muhammad was transported from the Sacred Mosque in Mecca to Al-Aqsa during his "night journey" (which is defined as Muhammad traveling from Mecca to the furthest Mosque and then up to heaven). The Mosque is reported to accommodate more than 5,000 worshippers and is the third holiest site in Islam after Mecca and Medina

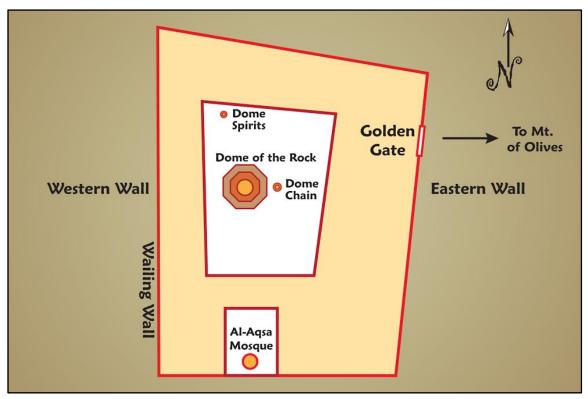


Figure 2. Temple Mount Map

Dome of the Spirits/Tablets

The Arabic shrine acknowledged as the Dome of the Spirits/Tablets is a small dome supported by columns and theorized to have been built over the foundation stone that supported the Ark of the Covenant in the Jewish Temple Holy of Holies (similar to the Dome of the Rock)

Dome of the Chain

 With a slight resemblance to the Dome of the Rock, there is a smaller free standing domed structure, supported by pillars, located adjacently east of the Dome of the Rock, and built in 691 AD. Often previously used as a prayer house and treasury by the Muslims, its name originates from the tradition according to King Solomon who would test the truthfulness of witnesses by having them hold a chain. Through the chain, lightning would strike those who bore false witness while those who were truthful were left unharmed. In later times, Muslim tradition believes that on Judgment Day the chain will be hung from the center of the dome and will once again be used to judge the righteous from sinners

THE GOLDEN/EASTERN GATE

The Golden Gate – also referred to as the Eastern Gate – is located on the eastern wall of the Temple Mount and is summarized by the following points of interest:

- Mentioned numerous times in the Bible
- One of multiple gates in the surrounding walls of the Temple Mount
- The oldest of all the gates to the city
- o Only gate constructed on the east wall of the Temple Mount
- Faces the Mount of Olives
- Provides the only entrance to the Temple Mount area from the east (Kidron Valley)
- The Holiest gate for three primary faiths in Israel as follows:
 - Jewish arrival of the Messiah
 - Christian entrance of Jesus on Palm Sunday
 - Muslim future resurrection

However, let's look a little closer at the history and future prophetic implications of this gate. As a brief overview of history, the original Eastern Gate was destroyed during the Roman conquest and destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70 but was rebuilt *over* the original gate around the sixth century by the Byzantines. In 638 AD, the Muslim armies conquered Jerusalem with the Crusaders capturing and plundering Jerusalem in 1099 AD. In 1517 AD, the Muslim Ottomans under the leadership of Sultan Suleiman I The Magnificent conquered Jerusalem and began rebuilding the walls that had been destroyed. The rebuilt Eastern Gate was then *sealed* in 1541 by Sultan Suleiman I and has remained sealed even to this day (Figure 3). Although there is some disagreement among historians regarding the sealing of the Eastern Gate, it is traditionally believed that Sultan Suleiman I wanted to ensure the Messiah did not re-enter through the Eastern Gate during his reign (as predicted by his advisory rabbis), hence the Gate was sealed up. Additionally, and for good measure, a cemetery was located directly in front of the Gate as conservative Jewish wisdom dictates a Jewish Holy man would not defile himself by walking through a Muslim cemetery. Currently, the Eastern Gate is considered by the

Arabic/Muslim people to be their exclusive property – which is in direct conflict with biblical scripture.

Therefore, and with the preceding thoughts in mind, lets briefly consider the importance of the Eastern Gate as applied to biblical prophecy and begin by looking at a noteworthy prophetic vision by the prophet Ezekiel.



Figure 3. The Golden/Eastern Gate

Ezekiel was called into a prophetic ministry around 593 BC that lasted until about 571 BC. During that twenty-year period, Ezekiel was used by God to proclaim and dramatize the message of God to His people. Although Ezekiel is known for numerous prophecies, the 44th chapter contains a specific prophecy – stated over 2,500 years ago – regarding the closure of the Eastern Gate that still applies to modern times. Let's consider this prophecy by looking at Ezekiel 44:1-2 and then continue to the present (Figure 4):

"Then He brought me back to the outer gate of the sanctuary which faces toward the east; but it was shut. And the LORD said to me, **this gate shall be shut**; it shall not be opened, and no man shall enter by it, because the LORD GOD of Israel has entered by it; therefore it shall be shut" Ezekiel 44:1-2

These two verses unequivocally and prophetically state the Eastern Gate would be sealed at some time in the future. Now, let's continue on with the history of this prophecy. Exactly one week before His resurrection, Jesus traveled down from the Mount of Olives to Jerusalem on Palm Sunday (AD 30) and entered the Temple as detailed in Matthew 21:1-11, Mark 11:1-11 and Luke 19:28-48. It is important to remember the Eastern Gate provides the only entrance to the Temple from the east (Mount of Olives) and would have been the logical route from the Mount of Olives to the Temple. As a result, it is understood that Jesus entered the Temple by passing through the Eastern Gate.

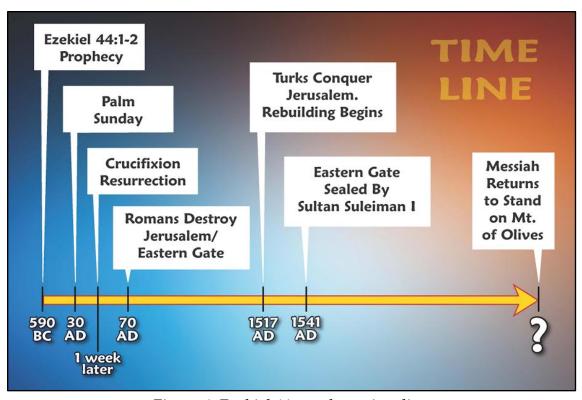


Figure 4. Ezekiel 44 prophecy time line

After Palm Sunday, and as previously mentioned, the original Eastern Gate was destroyed during the Roman conquest and destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70 but was rebuilt *over* the original gate about the sixth century by the Byzantines and was *sealed* in 1541 by Muslim Ottoman Sultan Suleiman I. Despite despite numerous attempts to open the Eastern Gate it has remained sealed even to this day, fulfilling the Ezekiel 44:1-2 prophecy. An example of the accuracy of this prophecy occurred at the conclusion of the 6-day war when Israeli commando soldiers wanted to open the Gate after nearly 500 years of closure. Interestingly, the leader of the commando group – who was an

Orthodox Jew – vehemently protested the idea stating, "The Eastern Gate can be opened only when the Messiah comes."

It should be noted that many prophetic authors teach that the Eastern Gate will not be reopened until the Messiah returns in glory and enters the Gate. Ezekiel 44:1-3 and/or Zechariah 14:3-4 are commonly used to substantiate this perception. Although this is a possible conclusion, it should not be a dogmatic assumption. Lets briefly look at each scripture as follows:

- o "Then He brought me back to the outer gate of the sanctuary which faces toward the east; but it was shut. (2) And the LORD said to me, this gate shall be shut; it shall not be opened, and no man shall enter by it, because the Lord God of Israel has entered by it; therefore it shall be shut. (3) As for the prince, because he is the prince, he may sit in it to eat bread before the Lord; he shall enter by way of the vestibule of the gateway, and go out the same way" Ezekiel 44:1-3

 In verse (3), the prince is not the Lord Jesus Christ but someone distinct from Him ("eat bread before the Lord") so this does not apply to Christ entering the Gate.
- o (3) "Then the Lord will go forth and fight against those nations, as He fights in the day of battle. (4) And in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which faces Jerusalem on the east. And the Mount of Olives shall be split in two, from east to west, Making a very large valley; half of the mountain shall move toward the north, and half of it toward the south." Zechariah 14:3-4 In this graphic account of the second coming of the Lord, He returns to personally intervene and prevent the eradication of His remnant (Israel) and fight against the gathered nations. Jesus will literally return to the Mt. of Olives, located east of the Kidron Valley and the Eastern Gate. When He does, there will be a tremendous topographical upheaval and a valley running east and west will be created as the mountain is pulled northward and southward. God's people will then be able to flee through this newly created valley while the Lord fights the gathered nations. Verses 3 and 4 do not say the Lord will pass through the Eastern Gate to the Temple. Although this is speculation, it is possible this topographical upheaval will destroy the Eastern Gate as the land is prepared for the coming Millennial Temple. The preceding two verses do not categorically support the claims of the aforementioned prophetic authors.

SOLOMON'S PRE-TEMPLE EXCAVATIONS

Of noteworthy interest, Solomon had the earth under the Temple Mount area excavated down to bedrock and then rebuilt to its present elevation. This was done to ensure that no corpses were buried beneath the forthcoming Temple and also prevent the possibility of defiling the Temple along with the sacrificial

system. As a result, limited modern excavations under the Temple Mount area have resulted in numerous and significant archaeological discoveries such as:

- An elaborate complex network of tunnels and secret passages
- o Numerous cisterns (one of which can hold over ten million gallons of water)
- Storage areas used to store grain and other items of interest
- Treasure rooms
- o Guard rooms (financial items, Temple treasures, etc)

In effect, there is a city that lies beneath the old city of Jerusalem and the Temple Mount. This underground complex remained unknown until excavations began almost immediately after the war of 1967 by Israel (and before control of Waqf) and it quickly became apparent that the magnitude of the underground complex defied description. It is currently estimated that in spite of the numerous discoveries, only a small percentage (about 10%) of the complex has been investigated and/or is known. This is primarily a result of Israeli-Muslim tensions, the control by Waqf, and is not an item of common discussion – even during the numerous tours to Israel by visitors. The multi-faceted purpose of this huge subterranean complex was as follows:

- Protect the inhabitants of Jerusalem during times of attack (Israel has been invaded over 27 times which is the most for any city)
- o Supply necessary essentials for survival
- Allow priests and other Temple personnel to easily access the Temple from above and below
- o Provide for water and eliminate waste materials for Temple sacrifices. An example for the necessity of these considerations, over 22,000 oxen and 120,000 sheep were sacrificed when Solomon dedicated the first Temple (Festival of Dedication), and over 250,000 sheep were sacrificed in one afternoon prior to the Romans attacking Jerusalem
- Provide escape tunnels for the kings of Israel to the Kidron Valley (and beyond). As an example, one tunnel that has been excavated is known as King Herod's escape tunnel and is over ten miles long. Another escape tunnel was used by King Zedekiah to escape the Babylonian invasion and is found in Jeremiah 39:4, and Jeremiah 52:7-11
- Likely hide and/or store Temple treasures. It is estimated the Temple collected about *one billion dollars each year* and it is known that David gave Solomon 100,000 talents of gold and 1 million talents of silver for the Temple. As previously mentioned and at today's standards, that is 128 billion dollars in gold and 26 billion dollars in silver

REBUILDING THE NEW (THIRD) TEMPLE

The Bible is clear that a Temple must be present on the Temple Mount before the key prophesied events of the Last Days can be fulfilled (i.e., Daniel 9:27, Daniel 11:31, Matthew 24:15-16, 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4, Revelation 11:1-2, etc). Additionally, rebuilding the Temple is central to the Messianic hopes of the Jewish people. However, as most students of Bible prophecy are aware, this is currently perceived as an unapproachable task due to numerous factors such as religious constraints, politics, and last but not least, the present location of the Dome of the Rock on the Temple Mount.

In addition to the preceding factors, another major constraint is the Temple cannot be rebuilt and worship cannot be re-instated unless the long inactive Sanhedrin is reconvened. The Sanhedrin was the highest Jewish Court and was also responsible to authorize the correct location of the Temple, establish the Levitical priesthood, institute the ancient rituals, and administer the numerous details that are related to the Temple. It is fascinating to note that God never withdrew his command for Israel to build a Temple (Exodus 25:8). Therefore, God's command is still in effect in modern times.

If people who are familiar with the Bible were questioned about the rebuilding of a new Temple on the Temple Mount, the common perception would likely be "a new Temple cannot be currently built as The Dome of the Rock occupies the location for the new Temple. Therefore, before a new Temple is built, something must happen to the Dome of the Rock." Surprisingly, this perception is a dichotomy of true and what can be described as *likely false* as follows:

- o Israeli law demands that any significant religious site in Israel (Christian, Jewish, Muslim, etc.) cannot be altered/damaged in a significant way regardless of events and is a criminal offense. This law was initiated by the Turks during their administration of the Temple Mount, was reinforced by the British Mandate (1921-1948), has been established in Israel's basic laws since 1948, and is known as the Protection of Holy Places Law 5727. Therefore, if the Dome of the Rock were ever damaged, Israeli law would assure that it is returned to its original condition. Consequently, the perception that the current location of the Dome of the Rock can be a major detriment to the rebuilding of the Temple on the same location is *true*
- The perception of the current Dome of the Rock location being a detriment to the rebuilding of a new Temple (on the same site) is *likely false* due to the recent archaeological discoveries and research by Jewish authorities. The previous overview of the subterranean complex under the Temple Mount has resulted in significant discoveries. Some of these discoveries have resulted in determining:
- The original location of Solomon's Temple (first Temple)

- The Herodian Temple foundation stones (second Temple) that are located on top of Solomon's Temple foundation stones. This area is directly north of the Dome of the Rock
- A tunnel from the time of King Herod that leads towards the location of the Temple Beautiful Gate (Acts 3:2) and the sealed Eastern Gate of the Temple Mount. This suggests the location of the first and second Temples are 150-feet north of the Dome of the Rock
- In the 1980's a cistern that was used to hold the liquid offerings connected with Temple services was discovered. Its location indicates the original Holy of Holies as being north of the Dome of the Rock and the Al-Aqsa shrine
- The location of the *original* Eastern Gate that is below the present Eastern Gate. It is known that Solomon's Temple was directly to the west (in an inline east-west direction) of the sealed Eastern Gate
- In summary, the third Temple could be built on the Temple Mount in a location about 150-feet north of the current location of the Dome of the Rock and directly west of the Eastern Gate. However, it is the responsibility of the Sanhedrin to determine the final location

CURRENT PREPARATIONS

In order for the rebuilding of the new Temple to commence, specific conditions must be met and/or in place. Let's look at Temple preparations that have actively been underway by Orthodox Jews and the Temple Institute in Israel.

THE SANHEDRIN

As previously mentioned, before the Temple can be rebuilt, the ancient Sanhedrin must be reconvened as one of their responsibilities was directing and supervising all matters pertaining to the restoration of the Temple. In the past, the last time the Sanhedrin convened was in AD 453. On October 13, 2004, over 70 of the most respected rabbis in Israel (appointed from the 12 tribes) were ordained to the new Sanhedrin and officially met in Jerusalem on January 20, 2005. They specifically considered the resumption of Temple worship and rebuilding the Temple. Three sites for a new Temple are currently being considered:

- Centered on the Dome of the Rock
- North of the Dome of the Rock
- South of the Dome of the Rock and near the Al-Aska Mosque

TEMPLE INSTITUTE

The Temple Institute is a dedicated group of orthodox rabbis that has been aggressively pursuing the completion of the many facets involved in the preparation of rebuilding the third Temple. As an example, tentative blueprints have been completed and are ready to be used for the construction process and can be viewed on-line at Temple Institute.org. A portion of the blueprints is illustrated in Figure 5.

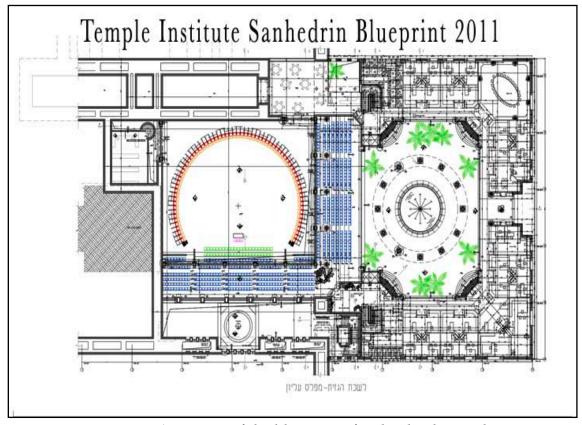


Figure 5. A portion of the blueprints for the third Temple

Beside the preparations for rebuilding the third Temple, the Temple Institute is also aggressively researching and creating the sacred garments, vessels, and other items used for sacrifice and worship in the Temple. This is currently being undertaken as follows:

- Breastplate for the high priest (Exodus 28:29-30)
- Linen robes (I Chronicles 28)
- Mizrak (used to capture blood from sacrificed animals and poured on corner of altar)
- Altar of Burnt Offering (2 Chronicles 4:1)
- o Laver of Cleansing (Exodus 30:18-19)
- Golden Candlestick/Menorah Exodus (25:31-32)

- o Table of Showbread (Exodus 25:23-24)
- Altar of Incense (Exodus 30:1-2)
- Two Silver Trumpets (Numbers 10:2)

OIL OF ANOINTING

The Oil of Anointing was used to anoint the Tabernacle, the high priest, the sacred objects of worship (Exodus 30:25-30), and will also be used to anoint the Messiah upon his triumphant return to this earth. This specific sacred oil – known as *shemen afarsimon* – originated during the Exodus but disappeared when the Romans destroyed Herod's Temple in 70 AD. However, a recent discovery has allowed the exact same ancient oil to be used in modern times.

Most people are familiar with the discovery of the Qumran Dead Sea Scrolls in 1947 but are not as familiar with a Copper Scroll that was discovered in Cave 3 near Qumran in 1953. The metallic manuscript, officially named 3Q15, was carefully restored and then opened to reveal a detailed list of 64 secret locations where Jewish Essene priests had hidden gold and silver treasures from the Temple. One of the key treasures mentioned was the Oil of Anointing.



Figure 6. The Copper Scroll, Jordan Museum in Amman

When Cave 11 in Qumran was searched, archaeological teams found a clay jar wrapped in palm leaves and buried three feet deep that contained an oil-

type material that had turned into a gelatin-type substance. When the substance was analyzed it was determined to contain the *exact* same five ingredients in the proper biblical ratios as delineated in Exodus 30:23-24 as God commanded Moses. The five ingredients were composed of:

- o Myrrh
- Sweet cinnamon
- Sweet calamus
- o Cassia
- o Olive oil

Further testing by the Pharmaceutical Department of the Hebrew University has determined this is the ancient Oil of Anointing and Carbon-14 radioactive dating confirmed its age as about 2,000 years old. This discovery now makes it possible to anoint the new Temple, sacred vessels, priests, and the Messiah! Interestingly, the Copper Scroll has been on display since 2013 at the Jordan Museum in Amman (Figure 6). It is noteworthy to remember that Jesus of Nazareth was never anointed during his 33 years on earth but it is now possible to do so on his triumphant return to Jerusalem.

BLUE DYE FOR HIGH PRIESTS GARMENTS

Among the many items that God specifically chose for the Israelites was the color blue (*tekhelet*) and is mentioned in the Hebrew Bible 49 times. This specific color was used in the tapestries in the Tabernacle, for the drapes in Solomon's Temple, and robes worn by the high priests of Israel (Exodus 28:31). Even common Israelites were commanded to tie one string of tekhelet to the tassels on the corners of their garments to remind them of their unique relationship with God. This commandment is found in Numbers 15:38-39 – "Speak to the children of Israel: Tell them to make tassels on the corners of their garments throughout their generations, and to put a blue thread in the tassels of the corners."

This specific blue dye is only obtained from the digestive gland of a particular marine snail, the rare and small Hillazon snail that is only found in the Red Sea and long believed to be extinct. However, in the late 1990's, Israeli divers re-discovered the Hillazon snail in the Red Sea. As a result, it is now possible to use the exact same dye to color the robes of the high priests.

WATER OF PURIFICATION/RED HEIFER

The Water of Purification was used for cleansing (Numbers 19:1-10) which is another term for purification from sin. As applied to the Temples, it was also used at the consecration of the Levite Priesthood, ritual cleansing of the sacred vessels, and the Temple (previous and future). Therefore, when the third Temple is built, it cannot be used for worship until it is purified with the Water of

Purification. However, the Water of Purification has to be specifically made from the following 5 ingredients:

- Natural spring water
- Scarlet thread
- Cedar
- Hyssop (known for its antiseptic properties)
- o Ashes from a red heifer (a red cow)

To qualify for the Water of Purification, a red heifer that must meet the following biblical requirements must be available (Numbers 19:2):

- o Pure red in color (even the hooves must be red)
- Not one black or white hair
- o Without any blemish (wounds, blemishes, etc.)
- No yoke has been on its neck
- Female between the ages of 2 and 4 years old (this is the only female animal to be sacrificed). Of note, Jesus was betrayed for 30 pieces of silver which was the price of a female slave
- o Sacrificed "outside the camp"

A suitable red heifer is an extremely rare animal. As an example, and according to Jewish tradition, during the two thousand years from the time of this commandment and until the destruction of the second Temple in the first century AD, there have been only nine red heifers that have qualified for the aforementioned biblical criteria. Currently, Jewish authorities are raising a herd of red cows in Israel for a qualified candidate. However, it has been reported as of June 26, 2014 (internet – Red Heifer Found in America) that a red heifer has been located in America but it will be necessary to wait two additional years to verify the red heifer as a qualified candidate. If this red heifer continues to be a suitable candidate, the necessary elements for the third Temple will be in place.

Although there is an intensive search for the original red heifer ashes, it is not necessary to make the Water of Purification from the original red heifer ashes. As a side note;

- The sacrifice of a red heifer and the Water of Purification symbolize the sacrifice of Jesus Christ for our sins (Hebrews 9)
- Without blemish signifies Christ was without blemish
- Outside the camp is the same way Christ was crucified outside Jerusalem. Jesus also suffered outside the city gate to make the people holy through his own blood (Hebrews 13:11-12)

o The shedding of blood by the red heifer was (and is) a foreshadowing of the blood Christ shed on the cross for sins

COHANIM

The tribe of Levi is historically the priestly family of the Jewish people, responsible for blessings of the Jewish people, Temple service, and is described with their responsibilities in the books of Exodus and Leviticus. The Jewish priesthood began when Moses anointed his older brother Aaron the first high priest (Deuteronomy 18:5). Since that time, the priestly status has been passed from father to son without interruption for over 3,000 years, or more than 100 generations (patrilineal). The direct descendants of Aaron the brother of Moses are referred to as Cohanim (plural for Cohen).

Modern genetic DNA studies have indicated that the Y chromosome in a Cohanim has an unusual set of genetic markers that allows detection of a paternal and time connection for proper identification of priestly Jews that have descended from Aaron. Interestingly, the identification of Y chromosome markers has come to be known as the Cohen Modal Hapoltype (CMH) that is the standard genetic signature of the Jewish priestly family. Therefore, the CHM discovery has enabled the correct identification of direct descendants of Aaron to fulfill the requirements for the new Temple that will require a cadre of trained Levites for priests. Training of Levite priests for the new Temple is currently underway with over 700 candidates. Interestingly, I Chronicles 23:2-6 states that 24,000 Levite males were used just to oversee the First Temple.

THE ARK OF THE COVENANT

"Then Bezalel made the ark of acacia wood; two and a half cubits was its length, a cubit and a half its width, and a cubit and a half its height. He overlaid it with pure gold inside and out, and made a molding of gold all around it. And he cast for it four rings of gold to be set in its four corners; two rings on one side, and two rings on the other side of it. He made poles of acacia wood, and overlaid them with pure gold. And he put the poles into the rings at the sides of the ark, to bear the ark. He also made the mercy seat of pure gold; two and a half cubits was its length and a cubit and a half its width. He made two cherubim of beaten gold; he made them of one piece at the two ends of the mercy seat. The cherubim spread out their wings above, and covered the mercy seat with their wings.

They faced one another; the faces of the cherubim were toward the mercy seat"

Exodus 37:1-9

Of all the conditions that must be met to rebuild the Temple and initiate the sacrificial system, the Ark of the Covenant (45" X 27" X 27") not only plays a key role in the Temple but also is perhaps the most familiar object associated with the Tabernacle and Temple (remember the movie Raiders of the Lost Ark?),

and its current existence and/or location is definitely the most controversial. The original Ark began its existence in the Tabernacle and contained (Hebrews 9:4):

- The Ten Commandments (God's concern for his people and His law to guide Israel)
- The budded Rod of Aaron (displayed God's sovereign choice of Israel and supernatural deliverance from Egypt)
- o Golden pot with manna (daily provisions from heaven for His people)

However, during the time of Solomon, the Ark only contained the Ten Commandments (1 Kings 8:9) and disappeared during this time in history. From the time of Solomon's reign until the present time in history, the Bible does not mention the location of the Ark. Scholars agree that it was not present in the Temple after the Jewish captives returned from Babylon in 536 B.C. The last time the Ark is mentioned in the Bible is in 2 Chronicles 8:11 – "Now Solomon brought the daughter of Pharaoh up from the City of David to the house he had built for her, for he said, My wife shall not dwell in the house of David king of Israel, because the places to which the ark of the LORD has come are holy."

However, although the current status of the Ark is unclear, scholars agree the Ark will play a pivotal role in the Third Temple in the last days. As there is much speculation regarding the existence and/or the current location of the Ark, the four most popular viewpoints are listed as follows:

- The Ark does not exist (previously destroyed)
- The Ark was presently hidden in a secret location under the Temple Mount area from invading Babylonian armies
- The Ark is presently hidden in Ethiopia (allegedly under the church of St. Mary of Zion in Aksum)
- The Ark has been secretly moved from its location in Ethiopia to a secret location under the Temple mount area (at the end of the Ethiopian civil war)

Although the potential that the Ark does not exist and/or is presently hidden under the Temple Mount area is easily understood, its alleged presence in Ethiopia is not as well recognized. To clarify this issue from the perspective of ancient tradition and for informational purposes, let's look at a brief history of why some scholars (and even some facets of the media) believe the Ark could still be in Ethiopia:

o From biblical history, the queen of Sheba visited King Solomon during his reign as king of Israel "And king Solomon gave to the queen of Sheba all her desire, whatsoever she asked, beside that which she had brought unto the king. So she turned, and went away to her own land, she and her servants" 2 Chronicles 9:12

- We also know that king Solomon desired female companionship, married foreign women (2 Chronicles 8:11) and having children by some of them
- According to Ethiopian history (Ethiopian Royal Chronicles), king Solomon married the queen of Sheba and they produced a royal heir, Prince Menelik I
- It is alleged that king Solomon educated the Prince in Jerusalem until he was nineteen with the Prince becoming a strong believer in Jehovah
- It is also alleged the Prince then returned to Ethiopia (becoming the first Solomonic Emperor of Ethiopia) with a large contingent of Jews and taking the Ark of the Covenant with him where it is alleged to currently be hidden below a church in Aksum
- The preceding ancient tradition has appeared in many sources, some of which are:
 - National Geographic, 1935
 - Encyclopedia Britannica Online
 - Ethiopian murals in Ethiopia
 - Jewish magazine B'nai B'rith
 - Canada's largest magazine, the *Toronto Star*

CONCLUSION

Although the future of the Temple Mount and the location of Temple artifacts are intriguing, the real question is "what is your future in life?" If the Bible is true (and the evidence from science and Scripture indicate that it is), then each person should be concerned with their future destiny and specifically, where you will spend eternity. The Bible clearly says, "All have sinned and come short of the Glory of God" (Romans 3:23), and those without a personal acceptance of God will spend eternity in a lake of fire (Revelation 20:15). However, God has provided an alternate choice, and that choice is a free gift that only needs to be accepted by you "For God so loved the world, that He gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life (John 3:16), and "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the LORD shall be saved" (Romans 10:13). This is God's message to you; so have you accepted his free gift of eternal life?

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