

THE THIRD TEMPLE: A COVENANT SOLUTION

Rebuilding the Beit HaMikdash Without Destroying the Dome of the Rock

A Research Brief from Miqdash Bethel

Elder Kepha (Peter) Arcemont | kepha613@gmail.com

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I. THE MOMENT: WHY THIS CONVERSATION CANNOT WAIT

Are there forces connected to the Iran-Israel-USA conflict whose ultimate objective is the destruction of the Dome of the Rock and the Al-Aqsa Mosque on the Temple Mount, in order to clear the way for rebuilding the Jewish Temple? Tucker Carlson has mentioned this subject many times on several broadcasts and drew condemnation from across the political spectrum and exposed a genuine fault line in global religious and geopolitical consciousness.

Whatever one believes about the motives behind the current conflict, the underlying question is real and urgent: Is there a peaceful path to the Third Temple that does not require war, destruction, or the erasure of Islamic holy sites? The answer rooted in Yehezkel (Ezekiel) and confirmed by serious archaeological scholarship is yes. This brief presents that case.

II. WHAT THE TANAKH ACTUALLY SAYS: EZEKIEL 40-48

A. The Vision

In the twenty-fifth year of Israel's Babylonian exile (573 BCE), the prophet Yehezkel (Ezekiel) was transported in a divine vision to a very high mountain in the land of Israel and shown a detailed architectural blueprint for a future Temple. The vision spans nine chapters (Ezekiel 40-48) and includes precise measurements of gates, courts, chambers, the sanctuary, and the altar, recorded using a special measuring rod of six great cubits.

"Son of man, this is the place of My throne, and the place of the soles of My feet, where I will dwell in the midst of the children of Israel forever." -- Ezekiel 43:7

This is not a vision of the Second Temple that Zerubbabel later built -- that structure's dimensions do not match Ezekiel's blueprint. Maimonides himself, in his Mishneh Torah, referred to Ezekiel's vision as describing "the temple that will be built," and noted that its dimensions and design were reserved for the future.

B. The Scale: Too Large for the Current Temple Mount

One of the most significant and frequently overlooked facts about Ezekiel's temple is its enormous scale. The outer court alone measures 500 x 500 reeds -- not cubits. At Ezekiel's measurement standard, this places the outer boundary at approximately 875 feet square, set within a larger consecrated district. The full sacred district described in Ezekiel 45 and 48 encompasses a vast territory. This structure is too large to fit on the current Temple Mount as traditionally understood -- which is precisely why serious researchers have concluded that Ezekiel's vision corresponds not to the ancient footprint, but to the Temple Mount in its present expanded form.

C. The Outer Court and the Nations

A critical detail often missed: Ezekiel's temple does not require the removal of the structures currently occupying the southern end of the Temple Mount. In Ezekiel's vision, there is no outer court rebuilt on the south side. The prophet begins his measurements from the south -- but the outer court on the south side is conspicuously absent from the rebuilt structure.

Revelation 11:1-2 echoes this precisely. The angel instructs John to measure the temple, the altar, and those who worship there -- but to leave out the outer court, because it has been given to the nations (Gentiles). This "outer court given to the nations" is where the Dome of the Rock stands today. The prophetic text does not call for its destruction. It calls for it to remain outside the measured, consecrated precinct of the new Temple.

"But leave out the court which is outside the temple, and do not measure it, for it has been given to the Gentiles. And they will tread the holy city underfoot for forty-two months." -- Revelation 11:2

III. THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL CASE: WHERE THE TEMPLE ACTUALLY STOOD

A. Dr. Asher Kaufman: The Northern Location Theory

For most of the past 1,300 years, the prevailing assumption has been that the Dome of the Rock was built directly over the site of the First and Second Temples -- specifically over the Foundation Stone (Even HaShetiyah) upon which the Ark of the Covenant rested in the Holy of Holies. This "traditional" or "central location" theory has been the dominant rabbinic and scholarly view since the 16th century, when Rabbi David ben Zimra formally identified the Foundation Stone with the rock beneath the Dome.

However, in the early 1980s, Dr. Asher Kaufman, a Professor of Physics at Hebrew University's Racah Institute and one of the foremost scholars of Jerusalem's temple site, challenged this assumption with rigorous scientific evidence. Using ancient literary sources -- including the Mishnah tractate Middot, Josephus, and other Second Temple period accounts -- combined with careful measurement of hewn bedrock formations on the Temple Mount platform, Kaufman concluded that the Holy of Holies of both the First and Second Temples was located approximately 330 feet (100 meters) to the north of the Dome of the Rock.

At that northern location sits a small, largely unnoticed Islamic structure called the Dome of the Spirits (Qubbat al-Arwah) or the Dome of the Tablets (Qubbat al-Alwah). Beneath this modest canopy, bedrock protrudes through the platform floor -- and uniquely, this bedrock is level with the surrounding paving stones. Dr. Kaufman argues this exposed, level bedrock is the actual Foundation Stone -- the Even HaShetiyah -- the surface upon which the Ark rested.

His key corroborating evidence: A line drawn from the center of the ancient Eastern Gate (the Golden Gate) runs directly through the Dome of the Spirits, not the Dome of the Rock. Ancient sources consistently describe the Temple's east-west centerline as passing through the center of the Eastern Gate. This alignment places the Temple in the northern sector of the Mount, not the center.

B. Christian Widener: Engineering Confirmation

In his book *The Temple Revealed* (2021), Christian Widener, a PhD in mechanical engineering, independently corroborated Kaufman's northern placement using engineering analysis. He noted that the flat, level bedrock beneath the Dome of the Spirits could only be level with the surrounding Herodian platform if the platform was built and leveled to match it -- meaning the bedrock predates the platform and served as the foundational reference point from which all construction was measured. This is the kind of precision that ancient builders would apply to a sacred stone.

Widener proposed a practical joint-use scenario: the northern one-third of the current Temple Mount complex could house an Israeli-controlled area for the rebuilt Temple, while the Dome of the Rock and Al-Aqsa Mosque remain intact in the southern portion under existing arrangements. The prophetic and archaeological evidence, he argues, makes this not only possible but scripturally indicated.

C. The Four Location Theories Summarized

Scholars have proposed four primary locations for the original Temple site:

- Northern Location (Kaufman / Widener): Holy of Holies beneath the Dome of the Spirits, 330 feet north of the Dome of the Rock. The Dome of the Rock falls within the outer court.
- Central / Traditional Location (Ritmeyer / Bahat): Holy of Holies beneath or adjacent to the Dome of the Rock. This is the most widely held rabbinical view.
- Southern Location (Sagiv): Temple site lies due east of the Western Wall, between the Dome of the Rock and Al-Aqsa Mosque.
- City of David / Gihon Spring Theory (Price et al.): Temple was located entirely off the current Mount, in the ancient City of David near the Gihon Spring. This would place the entire Temple Mount in the Gentile outer court.

Of these, only the Northern Location (Kaufman) and the City of David theory allow the Third Temple to be built without disturbing the Dome of the Rock. The Northern Location is the most archaeologically developed and scripturally supported of the two.

IV. EZEKIEL'S MEASUREMENTS AND THE DOME OF THE ROCK

One of the most striking arguments for Ezekiel's vision describing the present-day Temple Mount configuration -- including the Dome of the Rock -- comes from a detailed analysis of the outer court measurements in Ezekiel 40-44. In Ezekiel's vision, the outer court on the south side of the temple is conspicuously not rebuilt in its entirety. The prophet begins measuring from the south but the southern outer court is left open -- undesignated, unenclosed.

Research published on thirdtemple.com and elsewhere argues that Ezekiel's exact measurements, never before fully applied in the manner Ezekiel specified, fit the current Temple Mount platform precisely -- with the vacant northern area accommodating the temple structure and the Dome of the Rock occupying the position of the outer south court. This is not coincidence; it is covenant design.

The prophetic implication is clear: Ezekiel was not describing a Mount cleared of all existing structures. He was describing the Mount as it would appear in the day of rebuilding -- with a public building already standing to the south, in the outer court, given to the nations.

"This is the law of the temple: the whole territory on top of the mountain shall be most holy. Behold, this is the law of the temple." -- Ezekiel 43:12

V. SUPPORTING TANAKH AND PROPHETIC FRAMEWORK

Zechariah 14

Zechariah 14 describes a day when all nations will come up to Jerusalem to worship and keep the Feast of Tabernacles. The nations are not destroyed -- they are invited. The mountain of the LORD's house becomes the highest mountain (Isaiah 2:2-3), but it becomes a house of prayer for all peoples, not a monument to one.

*"And it shall be that whichever of the families of the earth do not come up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, on them there will be no rain."
-- Zechariah 14:17*

Isaiah 56

"Also the sons of the foreigner who join themselves to the LORD... even them I will bring to My holy mountain, and make them joyful in My house of prayer. Their burnt offerings and their sacrifices will be accepted on My altar; for My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations." -- Isaiah 56:6-7

The Third Temple, as described in the Tanakh, is not a monument to Jewish exclusivity. It is a house of prayer for all nations. Its construction is designed by Yahweh to bring peoples together -- including those whose sacred structures currently occupy the outer court. The Dome of the Rock standing in the court of the nations is not an obstacle to this vision. It may be part of it.

Ezekiel 47-48: The River and the Inheritance

Ezekiel's vision does not end with the Temple structure. It flows into the renewal of the land itself -- with a river of living water flowing from beneath the temple threshold, healing the Dead Sea, and bringing life to every place it reaches (Ezekiel 47:1-12). The land is then redistributed among the twelve tribes, and -- critically -- the foreigners (gerim) who dwell among Israel receive an inheritance among them as native-born sons (Ezekiel 47:22-23). This is the covenant framework that the Counsel of Peace has been developing in its broader peace architecture: a shared inheritance, rooted in shared ancestral heritage, confirmed by both scripture and genetic science.

"It shall be that you will divide it by lot as an inheritance for yourselves, and for the strangers who dwell among you and who bear children among you. They shall be to you as native-born among the children of Israel; they shall have an inheritance with you among the tribes of Israel." -- Ezekiel 47:22

VI. THE COVENANT RESPONSE TO TUCKER CARLSON'S QUESTION

Tucker Carlson asked whether this conflict could be a religious war designed to rebuild the Third Temple on the ashes of Al-Aqsa. The question deserves a prophetic answer, not a political one.

The prophetic answer is this: The Third Temple, as Yehezkel's vision reveals it, does not require the ashes of Al-Aqsa. It does not require war. It does not require the erasure of Islamic holy sites. The Dome of the Rock sits in the outer court -- the court given to the nations, the court the angel commanded be left unmeasured. Those who are calling for the destruction of the Dome of the Rock as a precondition for the Temple are not reading Ezekiel's blueprint. They are reading a political agenda backward into a prophetic text.

The real question is not whether to destroy the Dome of the Rock. The real question is whether the nations -- Jewish, Muslim, and Christian -- have the courage and the humility to read the ancient text together, to stand before the same covenant Elohim, and to acknowledge that the mountain was never meant for war. It was meant to be a house of prayer for all peoples.

Miqdash Bethel and the Counsel of Peace are calling for exactly this: a covenant-based framework in which the Third Temple is built on its true scriptural site -- the northern sector of the Temple Mount, on the bedrock beneath the Dome of the Spirits -- while the Dome of the Rock and Al-Aqsa remain intact, within the outer court of the nations, exactly where Ezekiel's vision places them.

VII. KEY SOURCES AND FURTHER READING

Tanakh / Scripture:

- Yehezkel (Ezekiel) 40-48 -- Temple Vision, Measurements, River, and Land Inheritance

- Zechariah 14 -- Nations Coming to Jerusalem
- Isaiah 2:2-3; 56:6-7 -- House of Prayer for All Nations
- Revelation 11:1-2 -- Outer Court Given to the Gentiles
- Daniel 9:27 -- Covenant and Temple in the End Times

Scholarly Research:

- Dr. Asher S. Kaufman -- Biblical Archaeology Review, Vol. IX No. 2 (1983); The Temple Mount: Where is the Holy of Holies? (Har Yera'eh Press, 2004)
- Christian Widener, PhD -- The Temple Revealed (2021)
- Maimonides (Rambam) -- Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Beit HaBechirah
- Mishnah Tractate Middot -- Measurements and Layout of the Second Temple
- Lambert Dolphin -- Four Temple Location Theories, templemount.org

Prepared by Miqdash Bethel

Elder Kepha (Peter) Arcemont, Founding Voice | Counsel of Peace
Pearl River, Louisiana | kepha613@gmail.com

"My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations." -- Isaiah 56:7