

The Prophetic Significance of the Messianic Temple to Every Christian

Sometimes when traveling and speaking in churches throughout the US, I remind my friends and audience that Jesus was an orthodox Jew in Israel in his day as I am an orthodox Jew in Israel today. We share the same holidays, read the same Scripture, and live our lives through the prism of Jewish values, culture and society. Sometimes I'll add, tongue in cheek, that one of the main differences is that he was able to bring offerings to the Temple where he worshiped, and I can only pray to do so. Strangely, as an Israeli Jew, I am prohibited from praying on the Temple Mount where the Temples once stood due to Muslim sensibilities.

Though nearly 2000 years have passed since Jesus walked, worshiped, and taught in the Temple, and we still wait and pray for it to be rebuilt, the Temple is no less significant in my life today as it was in his then. Indeed, for every year between then and now, tens of millions of Jews have prayed for the restoration of the Temple, literally in our daily liturgy and in many aspects of our culture. For instance, it's common when building a new home to leave a section incomplete, recognizing that our lives are not complete until the Temple is restored. When saying blessings after a meal, the prayer to rebuild Jerusalem is invoked. Even during the happiest of occasions such as weddings, we remind ourselves that our lives are not complete until the Temple is rebuilt.

No season in the Jewish calendar is more resonant of this huge missing piece in our lives than that which we have just observed. For three weeks on the Jewish calendar, beginning on the 17th of the month of Tammuz (when the Romans breached the walls of Jerusalem in the year 70), and culminating with a

national day of mourning on the 9th of the month of Av when the Temple was destroyed, we are especially mindful of our actions and the sincerity of our prayers so that we will merit the return of the Temple as the center of our lives physically, not just in our prayers.

The 9th of Av, Tisha B'Av in Hebrew, is a day of mourning and fasting not just for the destruction of the Second Temple in 70, but on the same day the First Temple was also destroyed, adding to our awareness that there are no coincidences when it comes to God. A number of other calamities befell the Jewish people on Tisha B'Av, making this a day of deep introspection, and praying that we will live to see the Third Temple rebuilt.

I used the opportunity of the Shabbat preceding Tisha B'Av to reread an in depth and thorough book that was given to me as a gift, *The Messianic Temple*. The book is engaging both because of how detailed it is, and that it adds photos and illustrations to help the reader see what is being discussed.

The Messianic Temple is based on the prophesy of Ezekiel, and a detailed analysis of the Scripture of Ezekiel 40-48. The original Hebrew text is balanced by an English translation, and followed by a line by line explanation of the text using a variety of sources.

Preceding the Scripture, the author, Rabbi Chaim Clorfene, provides dozens of pages of background for context and understanding who Ezekiel was, why the Third Temple, the Messianic Temple, is so significant, a timeline offering the Biblical significance, and scores of footnotes and sources. In a less serious book, one could come away with the heading, 'everything you wanted to know about the Third Temple but were afraid to ask.' It's that detailed and comprehensive.

I was particularly pleased that my son came into the room and asked what I was reading. I shared it with him happily. He

responded enthusiastically, grabbing the book from me and studying some of the pages and illustrations. He was really engaged which told me that the subject and presentation really does hit the nail on the head. Having grown up in Israel with Hebrew as his comfort language, he asked me if I could find the book in Hebrew. Not only will I try, it's a meaningful enough investment if only one of my children is brought closer to the understanding of the history, significance, and centrality of the Temple in our lives, albeit that it does not stand today, yet, and our role to be active players in realizing God's promise to rebuild the Temple one final prophetic time.

I wouldn't call *The Messianic Temple* a page turner. That suggests a level of excitement that one can't wait to get to the next page. In fact, it's the opposite. The detail is so great that one can spend lots of time on each page, wanting to gain insight and understanding from every nuance and thought. For me at least, it was a slow read, enriching and inspiring in every page. Having the presentation of the Scripture as well done as it is, preceded with ample historical references, makes this an outstanding source and resource for anyone who, like me (and Jesus), live our lives on the centrality of the Temple, and for anyone who prays for it to be rebuilt soon.

So may it be His will.

Jonathan Feldstein was born and educated in the U.S. and immigrated to Israel in 2004. He is married and the father of six. Throughout his life and career, he has been blessed by the calling to fellowship with Christian supporters of Israel and shares experiences of living as an Orthodox Jew in Israel. He writes a regular column for 's Standing With Israel. You can contact Jonathan at firstpersonisrael@.