

Why I'm Looking for the Fourth Temple—Not the Third

Last week I wrote about the danger of supporting Orthodox Jews in the establishment of a third temple. It generated quite a bit of interest and some requested that I continue to share on this subject. One gentleman wrote on Facebook:

"I agree with most of this article except the part about the third temple. Yeshua will remain in heaven until all things are restored. Without the restored temple, how does Yeshua defeat the antichrist and rule and reign from Mt Zion?"

First, the Bible does not say, "Yeshua will remain in heaven until all things are restored." It says, "until the time comes for God to restore everything." (Acts 3:21, NIV) Some things God has already begun to restore. In the church, we can see that tongues, revival preaching, purity, immersion in the Holy Spirit and the power of God have been and are being restored. Restoration to Israel includes the rebirth of the actual nation, Jerusalem, a place of leadership among the nations as a light of technology, military leader and the believing remnant of Jews. Yes, God is restoring!

But not everything will be restored *before* He returns. He remains in heaven not until all things are restored, but until the time comes for the restoration.

The Third Temple Is the Temple of the Antichrist

But is the third temple a part of that restoration? Simply put, no. The third temple is absolutely a part of end-time prophecy, but that doesn't make it a blessing. The Antichrist is part of end-time prophecy, but I am not praying for his appearance. And I am certainly not excited about it, or giving money to his campaign, as many believers are to the Third

Temple Institute. The third temple will be a temple of deception, leading Jewish people back to a pre-Yeshua sacrificial religion.

How the Third Temple Is Built

You see, I am excited about the *fourth temple*. I'll address that in a minute. First, how will the third temple come about? Well, looking through a glass darkly, this is how I see things.

1. A world leader will arise, possibly out of the massive Israeli military victory prophesied in Ezekiel 38 and 39, and bring peace to the Middle East—beginning the seven-year tribulation. This leader will make provision for the rebuilding of the temple. My guess is that the Muslim mosques on the Temple Mount are destroyed in this war.

[The antichrist] will confirm a covenant with many for one 'seven' (seven years). In the middle of the 'seven' he will put an end to sacrifice and offering. And at the temple he will set up an abomination that causes desolation, until the end that is decreed is poured out on him (Dan. 9:27).

Refer also to Daniel 11:31 and 12:11, which seem to speak of the Antichrist putting an end to sacrifices in the third temple.

In order for him to “put an end to sacrifice,” there must be a third temple. This rebuilding will lead to a Jewish revival and, probably, the persecution of Messianic Jews in Israel.

2. The second part of the verse says he will defile the rebuilt temple, “he will set up an abomination that causes desolation.” We see this confirmed by Paul.

[The Antichrist] will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, so that he sets himself up in God's temple, proclaiming himself to be

God (2 Thess. 2:4).

3. The Antichrist will suffer (or fake) a fatal wound, but will rise (or appear to) from the dead at this time (Rev. 13:3). This will give him the credibility to simply declare himself to be God. He will defile the temple and take it over, causing the Jews at the temple to flee.

So, you can see why I am not encouraging people to get behind the restoration of a Yeshua-less revival in Judaism. I am looking for the end-time prophecies that speak of the Jewish people turning to Yeshua (Rom. 11:26; Matt. 23:39), not to the blood of bulls and goats.

Some have argued that we should get behind the third temple because it will lead us closer to the coming of Yeshua. Personally, I find that disingenuous. That is like loving the Jewish people, just because you know that Jewish acceptance will lead to the Second Coming (Rom. 11:15). Yes, we should long for the Second Coming, but our love for the Jewish people should stand alone, being grateful that the gospel came through them.

Yeshua's Temple

As temples go, there is one coming that will be amazing! But it is not the third temple. The Bible speaks of one that will be built in the Millennial kingdom. Scholars refer to it as the fourth temple or the Millennial temple. It will be constructed only after the Messiah returns, while the third temple is clearly built before the return of Yeshua (Dan. 9:27; 2 Thess. 2:4).

The most detailed description of the Messiah's temple (as I call it) is in the last eight chapters of Ezekiel. Ezekiel who witnessed the destruction of the first Temple is taken captive to Babylon. There, he has prophetic visions. He is given a tour and instructions by none other than the builder himself,

Messiah Yeshua. In Chapter 44, He is referred to as Yahweh.

Nations Will Come

It appears that this fourth temple will be a learning center for the nations to be disciplined. Isaiah speaks of this:

“Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the temple of the God of Jacob. He will teach us his ways, so that we may walk in his paths. The Torah will go out from Zion, the word of the Lord from Jerusalem” (Isa. 2:3).

The gospel will be preached during the Millennium. The “survivors” from the nations will need to learn the Word of God. From Jerusalem, the Word will go back to their communities. People will be born during this time and need the message of salvation!

The Dead Sea Lives

Last week, I was at the Dead Sea. It is drying up. It is stunning to see the former shoreline and how far you must now walk to get to water. However, when Yeshua comes back and builds the fourth temple, the Bible speaks of a river coming out from under that temple that will flow all the way to the Dead Sea, making it live! There will even be fisherman!

This water flows toward the eastern region and goes down into the Arabah (desert next to the Dead Sea), where it enters the Dead Sea. When it empties into the sea, the salty water there becomes fresh. Swarms of living creatures will live wherever the river flows. There will be large numbers of fish, because this water flows there and makes the salt water fresh; so where the river flows everything will live. Fishermen will stand along the shore; from En Gedi to En Eglaim there will be places for spreading nets. The fish will be of many kinds—like the fish of the Mediterranean Sea. But the swamps and marshes will not become fresh; they will be left for salt. Fruit trees of all kinds will grow on both banks of the

river. Their leaves will not wither, nor will their fruit fail. Every month they will bear fruit, because the water from the sanctuary flows to them. Their fruit will serve for food and their leaves for healing (Ezek. 47:8-12).

I have a theory: The more the water evaporates at the Dead Sea, the closer we are to the coming of Yeshua.

Earthquake

What happens to the third temple? How do we know we will not simply convert it or renovate the structure? I don't think Yeshua will use the Antichrist's temple will have been utterly desecrated. It is what the Bible calls, "the abomination that causes desolation."

Furthermore, we see many references to a massive earthquake in Jerusalem at the time of His coming. One passage (Zech. 14:4) says His touchdown will cause the Mount of Olives to be split in two. The Mount of Olives faces the Temple Mount. Revelation 16 speaks of Jerusalem dividing into three parts.

It is reasonable to assume that the Antichrist's temple will be destroyed along with him, making way for Messiah's temple.

Conclusion

It is this author's belief that the third temple is the Antichrist's temple—even though it will be built at the place of the previous temples. It will begin with a Jesus-less Jewish revival and is then taken over by the Antichrist. At no time do I see where this temple is used to honor the Lord. Therefore, I cannot see why any believer would send money or pray for its construction. It would be far better to sow those funds into feeding the poor or evangelism. Supporting it is misguided religious zeal. It is the fourth temple, the Messiah's temple, for which we should be longing.

Footnote: End-times prophecy is never crystal clear. After

writing this there was one thing that troubled me. In both 2 Thessalonians 2:4 and Revelation 11:1, the temple is called “the temple of God.” How can it be of God when it erected by anti-Yeshua unbelieving Orthodox Jews and then taken over by the Antichrist?

I could not find much written on this. One theory is that even though the temple will not have much to do with real worship, it is built in the place where both previous temples stood, on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem—thus making it the temple of God. Or, just as the Bible says in Romans, Orthodox Jews are enemies of the gospel and yet beloved on account of Abraham. So too the third temple can have this dual sense of divine destiny, and yet, corruption. Remember, Paul speaks of the Jewish people having a true zeal, but missing the key component (Rom. 10:1-2)

Either way, it will be the fourth millennial temple to which the nations will stream in the age to come. I am longing for that. {eoa}

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