

Now Concerning Spiritual Things
an historical account of one man's walk with God

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THE MILLENNIAL KINGDOM
PART EIGHT

Characteristics of the Millennial Kingdom (continued)

15. Temple Worship (continued) The Bible is clear in establishing that the Jewish temple will be rebuilt in Jerusalem, at least by the midpoint of the seven-year tribulation. In the approximate time-frame of from 560 to 550 B.C., Daniel prophesied the rebuilding of the third Jewish temple with these words: "Then he [the Antichrist] shall confirm a covenant with many for one week [a week of seven years]; but in the middle of the week¹ he shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate, even until the consummation, which is determined, is poured out on the desolate."² These verses of scripture predict a future seven-year worldwide peace agreement negotiated by the Antichrist. At the midpoint of the seven-year agreement (twelve hundred and sixty days into the tribulation) once again Israel's temple is defiled. In order for this to happen, the tribulation temple will need to be in existence. Exactly when it is built is not clear, but my opinion is that included in the seven-year peace accord may be an unheard of negotiated agreement to move the Dome of the Rock from the temple mount in turn for concessions to the Arab-Islamic block of nations. This would clear the way for construction of the tribulation temple on the Temple Mount presently occupied by the Dome of the Rock.³

¹The "week of years" is two thousand five hundred and twenty days (360 x 7). The middle of the week (at the one thousand two hundred and sixty day mid-point) is when the seven-year peace accord is broken by the Antichrist, Satan and his angels are cast down to the earth (Revelation 12:7-9) and the earth begins to experience for one thousand two hundred and sixty days tribulation unlike anything that has occurred on the earth since the devastation of Noah's flood. Christians however have no need to fear those calamities since the Church will be raptured just prior to the appearance of the Antichrist.

²Daniel 9:27, brackets inserted.

³Built by Abd al-Malik and completed in 691 A.D. with repairs and/or slight modifications completed since then.

Around the year 28 A.D. Jesus echoed Daniel's prophecy with these words: "Therefore when you see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (whoever reads, let him understand), then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains."⁴

Here is what the apostle Paul prophesied about 51-52 A.D. confirming the rebuilding of the third Jewish temple: "Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin [the Antichrist] is revealed, the son of perdition, who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God."⁵ With these words Paul's prophecy depicts the Antichrist sitting in the temple and actually demanding to be worshiped as God. During this time his control over the earth is so absolute that no one, according to the apostle John, whether great or small, rich or poor, free or slave can buy or sell without a mark on their right hand or their forehead.⁶ When John wrote these words from Patmos prison around 85-90 A.D., this type of universal identification seemed to be preposterous. Today, however, the technology to affect that kind of mass identification is available through a tiny computer chip embedded under the skin so that one's location and identification could be instantly determined and accessed by a computer operator. Those who will not worship the Antichrist will be killed. His reign as an absolute monarch will make the atrocities under Hitler pale by comparison.

These prophesies by Daniel, Jesus, Paul and John solidify the fact of the rebuilding of the third temple in Jerusalem. One could therefore conclude that construction might start immediately after the worldwide peace accord is negotiated by the Antichrist. Nevertheless, whatever the construction starting date is,

⁴Matthew 24:15, 16.

⁵2 Thessalonians 2:3, 4, brackets inserted.

⁶See Revelation 13:16, 17.

it is apparent from these prophecies that the temple will be finished and in full use by the midpoint of the tribulation.

With these facts as a starting point, here is an interesting consideration. A fourth temple is described in exact detail in the book of Ezekiel, chapters forty through forty-eight. And the fourth temple will not be built in Jerusalem. According to Ezekiel's exacting construction specifications, the fourth temple will be built about twenty miles north of the center of present Jerusalem, on or near the site of ancient Shiloh where the tabernacle was set up by Joshua.⁷ There is ample scripture specifying the location that I will examine later. But for the present, let's consider the reality of a fourth temple, which many bible students call Ezekiel's temple, that will likely be built at the beginning of the Millennium. The existence of a fourth temple leaves us with a perplexing dilemma: the possibility of two temples shortly after the beginning of the Millennium. One on the Temple Mount and the other approximately twenty miles north of Jerusalem. What are the purposes of having two temples? Or will there be only one temple – Ezekiel's Millennial temple? An examination of scripture might shed some light on this dilemma.

Zechariah, whose ministry began in 520 B.C.,⁸ prophesied that Messiah, whom he calls the "Branch," would *Himself* build a temple in Israel and the *Branch* would be One who would hold the offices of both King and High Priest. Here are his words: "Take the silver and gold, make an elaborate crown, and set it on the head of Joshua [Yeshua] the son of Jehozadak, the high priest. Then speak to him saying, 'Thus says the Lord of hosts, saying: Behold, the Man whose name is the BRANCH! From His place He shall branch out, and He shall build the temple of the Lord; Yes, He shall build the temple of the Lord. He shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule on His throne; so He shall be a priest on His throne, and the counsel of peace shall be between them both.'⁹

Since Messiah (Yeshua) has already come to earth once, this passage must speak of His second

coming to rescue Israel, annihilate her enemies, build His Temple and establish His millennial kingdom on the earth, presumably ruling from Jerusalem. Although bible prophecy clearly establishes the existence of a third Jewish temple in Jerusalem during the Tribulation, I am unable to find the ultimate fate of that temple in the scripture. Here is a possible solution:

Catastrophic Destruction

A devastating earthquake will occur with the second coming of Christ to the mount of olives which, it appears, will destroy much of the city of Jerusalem. Major topographical changes will occur in the Jerusalem/Israel/Palestine area in the final days of the Tribulation prior to the battle of Armageddon.¹⁰ The following prophetic scriptures describe the devastation:

"Speak comfort to Jerusalem and cry out to her, that her warfare is ended, that her iniquity is pardoned; for she has received from the Lord's hand double for all her sins. The voice of one crying in the wilderness; prepare the way of the Lord; make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be exalted and every mountain and hill brought low, the crooked places shall be made straight and the rough places smooth."¹¹

"And it will come to pass at the same time, when Gog comes against the land of Israel, says the Lord God, that My fury will show in My face. For in My jealousy and in the fire of My wrath I have spoken: surely in that day there shall be a great earthquake in the land of Israel, so that the fish of the sea, the birds of the heavens, the beasts of the field, all creeping things that creep on the earth, and all men who are on the face of the earth shall shake at My presence. The mountains shall be thrown down, the steep places shall fall, and every wall shall fall to the ground. I will call for a sword against Gog throughout all My mountains, says the Lord God. Every man's sword will be against his brother. And I will bring him to judgment with pestilence and bloodshed; I will rain down on him, on his troops, and on the many peoples who are with him,

⁷See Joshua 18:1.

⁸See introduction to Zechariah by **Spiros Zodhiates**, Executive Editor of the Hebrew-Greek Key Study Bible, AMG Publishers, Chattanooga, TN.

⁹Zechariah 6:11-13, brackets inserted.

¹⁰Armageddon is a battle that never really takes place as it is planned. The human purpose is to gather the armies of the world to execute the Antichrist's "final solution" to the "Jewish problem." However, Christ chooses this moment to return to earth, thwart the Antichrist's attempt to destroy the Jews and rescues tiny Israel as the Jewish Messiah! Hallelujah!

¹¹Isaiah 40:2-4, italics and underlining added.

flooding rain, great hailstones, fire and brimstone."¹²

"And they gathered them together to the place called in Hebrew, Armageddon. Then the seventh angel poured out his bowl into the air, and a loud voice came out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, 'It is done!' And there were noises and thunderings and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake such a mighty and great earthquake as had not occurred since men were on the earth. Now the great city [Jerusalem] was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell. And great Babylon was remembered before God, to give her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath. Then every island fled away, and the mountains were not found. And great hail from heaven fell upon men, each hailstone about the weight of a talent [between fifty and sixty pounds]. Men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail, since that plague was exceedingly great."¹³

"For I will gather all the nations to battle against Jerusalem; the city shall be taken, the houses rifled, and the women ravished. Half of the city shall go into captivity, but the remnant of the people shall not be cut off from the city. Then the Lord will go forth and fight against those nations, as He fights in the day of battle. 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. Then you shall flee through My mountain valley, for the mountain valley shall reach to Azal. Yes, you shall flee as you fled from the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah. Thus the Lord my God will come, and all the saints with You. And in that day it shall be that living waters shall flow from Jerusalem, half of them toward the eastern [Dead] sea and half of them toward the western [Mediterranean] sea; in both summer and winter it shall occur. And the Lord shall be King over all the earth."¹⁴

Beginning with page two, column two, paragraph three, notice the underlined, italicized words descriptive of the calamitous devastation that will occur

¹²Ezekiel 38:18-22, italics and underlining added.

¹³Revelation 16:16-21, brackets inserted, italics and underlining added.

¹⁴Zechariah 14:2-5, 8, 9 (a), italics and underlining added.

in the Jerusalem/Israel/Palestine area (as well as other parts of the world) at the end of the Tribulation prior to the battle of Armageddon. Here is a summary of these drastic topographical changes in Jerusalem, as well as in other parts of the world:

Valleys will be raised and mountains thrown down (leveled). Every island will be obliterated (submerged?). Fire, brimstone and hailstones weighing fifty or sixty pounds will rain out of the sky. The mount of Olives will be split in two creating a passageway through which Jews will flee from their pursuers. All fish, birds, beasts of the field, creeping things and mankind will be shaken severely and adversely affected. All walls will fall and Jerusalem will be divided (split or broken) into three parts apparently leaving open cracks, fissures and/or chasms. Notice that the devastation described will be greater than anything man has experienced since the earth began! Jerusalem will be devastated. For that reason I believe (my opinion) it is entirely possible and even probable that the third temple will be destroyed as it has been twice before. In this case there would be only one Temple during the Millennium, built by the Lord Jesus Himself, according to Ezekiel's detailed plans.

God's Desire For Purity

From a human standpoint, I am hard pressed to find any rationale for two temples which would require the duplication of temple worship including ceremonial offering of sacrifices (which I will explain later). From the beginning, God wanted an *undefiled* place where He could dwell in His Shekinah Glory Presence on the earth of His creation. The Tabernacle temporarily served this purpose as did Solomon's Temple until it was *defiled* under the reign of king Manasseh.¹⁵ The second temple, constructed by Zerubbabel¹⁶ and later enlarged by Herod,¹⁷ carried the Roman insignia of an eagle. We have no record of the Shekinah Glory filling the Holy of Holies of this temple since it was apparently *defiled* from the beginning being built by the Romans and carrying the Roman insignia. Of course the tribulation temple will be defiled by the Antichrist by sitting in the temple and demanding to be worshiped as God, thus still leaving God with the desire to dwell

¹⁵See 2 Kings 21:7, Ezekiel 8:5-17.

¹⁶See Ezra 6:13-15.

¹⁷See John 2:20.

in an *undefiled* temple in the fullness of His Shekinah Glory Presence.

A glimpse of God's desired *undefiled purity* is seen in the apostle John's vision of the one hundred and forty-four thousand Jews, who are protected and sealed by God during the Tribulation.¹⁸ John saw them standing with the Lamb [Christ], who followed Him everywhere he went, *who were not defiled*, as firstfruits to God and the Lamb.

Ezekiel's temple¹⁹ that will be built by the Lord Jesus, Himself, at the beginning of the Millennium, will fulfill this longing of God's heart for *undefiled purity*. This would seem to be especially true in a temple constructed by God's Son, from which He will rule and reign over the world as absolute Monarch as Ezekiel proclaims, "The Spirit lifted me up and brought me into the inner court; and behold, the glory of the Lord filled the temple. Then I heard Him speaking to me from the temple, while a man stood beside me. And He said to me, '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*. No more shall the house of Israel **defile My holy name**, they nor their kings, by their harlotry or with the carcasses of their kings on their high places.'"²⁰ Under these circumstances, the singularity of purpose for the Temple would and will be reestablished once and for all, for everyone to see during the Millennium. And that Temple will remain *undefiled* through the Presence of the Lord Jesus Himself! Hallelujah! Come quickly Lord Jesus! I look forward to Your glorious return, your triumphant victory over the enemies of Israel and participating in the establishment of your Millennial rule and reign!

Millennial Kingdom Worship

Temple worship during the Millennial kingdom will first be a shock and then a learning experience for Gentiles and perhaps for Messianic Jews alike who may have little knowledge of Judaism and temple worship. *There will be animal sacrifices at the millennial Temple during the Millennium.* The reason is because Ezekiel's prophecy in chapters forty through forty-eight are explicit in these details (about which I

will write later). Once one arrives at that conclusion, the next thing for consideration is: what purpose will the sacrifices serve? About this Walvoord writes, "Objections to sacrifices in the Millennium stem mostly from the New Testament affirmations concerning the one sacrifice of Christ. According to Hebrews 7:27, Christ 'Who does not need daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins and then for the people's, for this He did once and for all when He offered up Himself.' According to Hebrews 9:12, Christ 'entered the Most Holy Place once and for all, having obtained eternal redemption.'"²¹ Therefore millennial sacrifices will not look forward to Christ but will look back to the Cross as a memorial to the one offering of Christ. An explanation is offered by Walvoord, "The millennial sacrifices will be no more expiatory than were the Mosaic sacrifices which preceded the Cross."²² As the Lord's Supper today is a remembrance of or for a memorial to the death of Christ, so the resumed millennial sacrifices will be a remembrance of or a pointing back to the memorial of the Cross and the whole wonderful story of the redemption for Israel and the nations of the earth, during the kingdom reign of Christ. In the Lord's Supper we show forth His death *until He comes again*. Therefore at His second coming *that memorial feast ends forever*. The resumed sacrifices *will then become that memorial of Christ and His redemption of Israel and the other nations of the world*. Much has been written on this subject and much more could be written here, but my purpose for bringing it up is to simply introduce to you the subject for consideration. I plan on being right in the middle of the millennial reign of Christ! If you have any doubt about your presence there, turn to Christ today – claim Him as Savior and Lord of your life, ask Him to come into your heart and make Himself *real* to you in a personal relationship that will change your life forever. Then remain faithful to Him and join me later during the Millennium for the experience of *eternity!*

In my next letter, the Lord willing, I will begin by reviewing briefly the similarities between the millennial system and the Aaronic system, which will be observed under Christ's kingdom reign, that could be only the flick of an eyelid plus seven years away from right now.

¹⁸See Revelation 7:1-8; 14:1-5.

¹⁹The details of Ezekiel's temple will be given later.

²⁰Ezekiel 43:5-7, italics and bold print added.

²¹John F. Walvoord, THE MILLENNIAL KINGDOM, Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, p.311.

²²Ibid., p.312.