

The Temple of God in the End of Days

Will a new Temple be built in Jerusalem on the Temple Mount in the near future? What does Bible prophecy have to say? Where would such a Temple be built? Great controversy rages among Jews and Christians on this subject. More and more preparations are being made, and preconditions are being satisfied for this exciting development and precursor for the coming of the Messiah!

William F. Dankenbring

A new Jewish interfaith initiative launched recently argues that building the Third Jewish Temple in Jerusalem would not necessitate the destruction of the Dome of the Rock.

"God's Holy Mountain Vision" project hopes to defuse religious strife by showing that Jews' end-of-days vision could harmoniously accommodate Islam's present architectural hegemony on the Temple Mount.

Says the Jerusalem Post, in an article entitled "Can Third Temple be built without destroying Dome of the Rock?", " 'This vision of religious shrines in peaceful proximity can transform the Temple Mount from a place of contention to its original sacred role as a place of worship shared by Jews, Muslims and Christians,' said Yoav Frankel, director of the initiative.

"The Interfaith Encounter Association at the Mishkenot Sha'ananim's Konrad Adenauer Conference Center in Jerusalem is sponsoring the program, which includes interfaith study and other educational projects.

"According to Islamic tradition, the Dome of the Rock, built in 691, marks the spot where Muhammed ascended to Heaven.

"But according to Jewish tradition, Mount Moriah, now under the Dome of the Rock, is where the Temple's Holy of Holies was situated.

"Until now Jewish tradition has assumed that destruction of the Dome of the Rock was a precondition for the building of the third and last Temple.

"However, in an article that appeared in 2007 in *Tehumin*, an influential journal of Jewish law, Frankel, a young scholar, presented a different option.

“His main argument is that Jewish doctrine regarding the rebuilding of the Temple emphasizes the role of a prophet.

“This prophet would have extraordinary authority, including the discretion to specify the Temple's precise location, regardless of any diverging Jewish traditions.

“In contrast, Baruch Ben-Yosef, chairman of the Movement to Restore the Temple, made it clear that the Temple had to be built where the Dome of the Rock presently stands. ‘All you need is a Sanhedrin,’ he said” ((Matthew Wagner, *The Jerusalem Post*, June 21, 2009).

A New Jewish Temple?

Muslim Arabs too are loathe to embrace the very idea.

Much controversy surrounds this provocative new approach. Orthodox Jews are in an uproar over the very idea, which smacks their “tradition” in the face. Mainstream Orthodox rabbis have opposed attempts to rebuild the Temple since the Mount came under Israeli control in 1967. The Chief Rabbinate of Israel even issued a decree prohibiting Jews from entering the area due to ritual purity issues.

However, several grassroots organizations such as the Movement to Restore the Temple, and maverick rabbis, including Rabbi Israel Ariel, head of the capital's Temple Institute and a leading member of the revived Sanhedrin led by Rabbi Adin Steinsaltz, have called to take steps to renew the sacrifices on the Temple Mount and rebuild the Temple.

What is going to happen? Will a new Temple be built on the Temple Mount in our time – before the END of this present age? Will it happen sooner rather than later?

The Temple Controversy

Fifteen years ago, I wrote an article declaring that the proper site to rebuild the Jewish Temple on Mount Moriah was not the location of the Dome of the Rock, the Muslim edifice in the center of the Temple Mount, but a location north of that spot.

Grant Jeffrey is an evangelical Canadian Minister who has spent much of his life as a student of Bible prophecy. He has written several books from which I have quoted from in the past. Reports and articles of other researchers including that of Grant R. Jeffrey pinpointed the location on the Temple Mount for rebuilding the Temple at 150 feet north of the Dome of the Rock This is directly west of the Golden Gate in the Eastern Wall of the Temple Mount.

Being convinced that this information was correct, I wrote it up in an article and sent a copy of it to Gershon Solomon, head of the Temple Mount Faithful organization in Israel. Gershon believed that the Temple must be rebuilt right where the Dome of the Rock stands. He responded to me by writing an article supporting the theory that the Dome of the Rock would have to be destroyed before the rebuilding of the Temple could

take place. After reading Gershon's information, I posted his article on the TPM website and pretty much ignored the subject after that time.

But hold the phone! Now NEW information has come to light, questioning the Jewish "traditions" surrounding this subject!

A new book was published in 2007 written by Grant Jeffrey entitled *The New Temple and the Second Coming*. It shows plainly that the need to destroy the Dome of the Rock is by no means required to rebuild God's House on the Temple Mount!

But does a new Temple need to be built at all? Why? Most Orthodox Jews say it will be built by the Messiah, after He comes, but what do the Scriptures say? Jesus Christ, Yeshua the Messiah, said, "The Scripture cannot be broken" (John 10:35). What does Holy Writ say on this subject? Both Old and New Testaments?

Prophecies of an End-Time Temple

Jesus Christ in the Mount Olivet prophecy speaks of signs of the end of the age and the *signs of Christ's second coming*. Among them, He declared, "Therefore when you SEE the 'abomination of desolation,' spoken of by Daniel the prophet, *standing in the holy place* [the Temple of God, in the "holy of holies"), then let those who are in Judea *flee to the mountains*" (Matt.24:15-16)..

Yeshua plainly says a physical temple is going to exist again, prior to his return!

Christ referred to a prophecy of the prophet Daniel. Daniel, of course, was a prophet during Old Testament times, and lived 500 years before Christ. Just what did Daniel say about the Temple and "abomination of desolation"?

Daniel had a prophetic vision of the future. Speaking of four kingdoms in the end of days, he says: "Out of one of them [the four horns or kings that divided up the Earth's nations] came another horn, which started small but grew in power to the south and to the east and toward the Beautiful Land. It grew until it reached the host of the heavens, and it threw some of the starry host down to the earth and trampled on them. It set itself up to be as great as the Prince of the host; it *took away the daily sacrifice* from him and the *place of his sanctuary* was brought low. Because of REBELLION, the host of the saints, and the *daily sacrifice* were given over to it. It prospered in everything it did, and truth was thrown to the ground" (Dan.8:9-11, NIV).

"Then I heard a holy one speaking, and another holy one said to him, '*How long will it take for the vision to be fulfilled* – the vision concerning the daily sacrifice, the rebellion that causes desolation, and the surrender of the sanctuary and of the host that will be trampled underfoot?' He said to me, 'It will take 2,300 evenings and mornings; then the sanctuary will be reconsecrated'" (Dan.8:9-14). What is the real meaning of this strange vision?

This vision refers to *many days in the future*. What is the length of this vision of the daily sacrifices and the transgression of desolation? For 2300 days the Sanctuary which is the Temple was to be trodden under foot by the Gentiles. Then the Sanctuary was to be restored and cleansed. The Hebrew word for “cleansed” also means “RESTORED.”

The End of Days

As other scriptures show, this refers to the end of days (our day and the Great Tribulation). This prophecy was for the latter time . . . for at the appointed time the end shall be” (Dan.8:19). This was to occur “when the transgressors have reached their fullness” (verse 23).

The Bible teaches the Temple must be rebuilt before Christ’s return. This is talking about the Sanctuary of God in Jerusalem, a literal physical Temple (not spiritual). When the *transgressors* shall reach their fullness. A great king shall rise up, a cunning man of mighty power who will destroy fearfully and cause deceit and craft to prosper under his rule. He EXALTS HIMSELF above all, and *opposes* all that is called god or worshipped (Dan.8:24-25).

Daniel was told that the “vision refers to many days in the future” (v.26).

This same end-time tyrant, or evil prince, this same “king of fierce countenance” (Dan.8:23-25), is also prophesied of in Daniel 9:26-27. Here Daniel records, “. . . but the people of the prince that shall come shall DESTROY the city AND THE SANCTUARY (that is, the Temple!) . . . and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.”

This is clearly speaking of the same spectacular time frame and prophetic event to occur at the very end of this present age -- the “consummation,” or “time of the end.” Here again we find mention of a Temple or “sanctuary” which must exist, in the end of days, with animal sacrifices being offered.

Daniel also mentions this incredible sacrilege in his eleventh chapter. This prophecy also ends in the “end of days.” In verse 30 Daniel relates that a great “king” will “pillage Jerusalem and *pollute the sanctuary, putting a stop to the daily sacrifices*, and worshipping idols inside the Temple. He will leave godless Jews in power when he leaves – men who have abandoned their fathers’ faith. He will flatter those who hate the things of God,” just as Antiochus Epiphanes did in 165-167 B.C., “and win them over to his side” (Dan.11:30-32, *Living Bible*).

. Says the Septuagint version, beginning in verse 31: “And seeds shall spring up out of him, and *they shall profane the sanctuary of strength* [the Temple of God in Jerusalem!], and they shall *remove the perpetual sacrifice, and make the abomination desolate*. And the transgressors shall bring about a *covenant [treaty, “peace”*

agreement] by deceitful ways: but a people knowing their God shall prevail, and do valiantly. And the intelligent among the people shall understand much [much truth will be revealed!]: yet they shall fall by the sword, and by flame, and by captivity, and by spoil of many days” (Dan.11:31-33).

Future Temple Destruction

In a prophetic Psalm which refers to the time of the Great Tribulation, God's people pray to Him, “Walk over these total ruins; *our enemies have destroyed everything IN THE TEMPLE*. Your enemies have shouted in triumph IN YOUR TEMPLE; they have placed their flags there as signs of victory. . . They *WRECKED YOUR TEMPLE and set it on fire; they desecrated the place where you are worshiped”* (Psalm 74:3-7).

In a similar Psalm is another prophecy of the time God's people will be invaded and taken captive by a foreign power in the Great Tribulation. God's people will lament, “O God, the heathen have invaded your land. They have **DESECRATED YOUR HOLY TEMPLE** and left Jerusalem in ruins” (Psalm 79:1).

Jeremiah laments, “The enemies robbed her of all her treasures. *She saw them enter the Temple itself*, where the Lord had forbidden Gentiles to go” (Lam.1:10). The prophet continues, in chapter two, “The Lord in his anger has covered Zion with darkness, its heavenly splendor he has turned into *ruins*. **ON THE DAY OF HIS ANGER** [the Great Tribulation] *he abandoned even his Temple”* (Lam.2:1).

The “day of His anger” refers to the Great Tribulation and the “Day of the Lord,” the time of God's **WRATH** and **FURY** because of His peoples’ sins and transgressions of His divine covenant and law! It is the time of His intervention in world affairs, the time He punishes His people with dire calamity and distress for their mounting sins! Therefore, this prophecy is aimed at our modern end-time age and generation! And here again a “Temple” is mentioned, which a wicked Gentile ruler will enter, and which God Himself will “abandon.” The very fact that He has abandoned it is evident because He will allow the heathen to enter it and pollute it!

In this same chapter of Lamentations, Jeremiah relates, “Like an enemy, the Lord has destroyed Israel; he has left her forts and palaces in ruins. He has brought on the people of Judah unending sorrow. He **SMASHED TO PIECES THE TEMPLE** where we worshiped him” (Lam.2:5-6).

New Testament Prophecies

The apostle Paul also predicted the same unusual event He wrote to the Thessalonians that in the end-time there would be a great “falling away” from the truth, an “apostasy,” when a “man of sin” would be 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” (II Thess.2:3-4).

How can this great evil Beast or Tyrant sit in the temple of God unless such a Temple is rebuilt and is in existence at the time of the end?

There is a prophecy found in the book of Revelation which foretells a future Temple in the “day of the Lord” (Rev.1:10), the time before the coming of the Messiah. A servant of God named John wrote:

“And there was given me a reed like unto a rod: and the angel stood, saying, Rise, and MEASURE THE TEMPLE OF GOD, AND THE ALTAR, and them that worship therein. But the court which is without the temple, measure it not; for IT IS GIVEN TO THE GENTILES . . .” (Revelation 11:1-2).

Could this not mean that not only will there be a future Temple, built during OUR TIME, today, but that part of the Temple Mount will REMAIN in the hands of the Arabs? Sort of a dividing up of the jurisdiction of the Temple Mount?

On the other hand, the court yard has been given to the GENTILES who will tread the Holy City (Jerusalem) under foot for 42 months (3 ½ years). In order for this to be fulfilled, there has to be a Temple!

The “outer court” would be the region south of the Temple area. History shows that Herod doubled the Temple Mount by building the section to the south of the original Temple Mount and its facilities. This would be the portion which contains the Mosque of Omar, or the Dome of the Rock! John was plainly told that *that* portion had been “given” over to the control of the “Gentiles”, at least for the time being!

The clear indication is that the Jews will exercise control over their own Temple Mount area, the northern section of the Mount; the ORIGINAL Temple Mount region, and the Muslims will exercise control over the areas to the south, which were added by King Herod – these are the areas which they consider as being “sacred” to them.

Where Will It Be Built?

Gershon Solomon of the Temple Mount Faithful and other Jews want to rebuild the Temple at the location of the Dome of the Rock. Of course, to do that a major Arab-Muslim edifice would have to be destroyed. If this “sacred” edifice were to be humanly destroyed, there would no doubt be devastating WAR with modern technology capable of wiping out Israel and most of the Arab nations surrounding it!

But does the Temple have to be built there? Where do we stand, at this moment, in regard to the rebuilding of God’s Temple?

The Incontrovertible Facts

The idea of a Temple in Jerusalem is no longer just a dream. The necessary events prior to Temple services and worship are now being fulfilled. The following are facts:

- 1) There is a new Sanhedrin in Israel of 71 rabbis
- 2) There is a Temple Institute that now has 500 trained Levite priests to serve in the restored /rebuilt Temple of God – capable of doing the animal sacrifices.
- 3) Over 100 sacred vessels of the Temple used in worship and the ceremonial cleansing of the Temple have been made, found/or located and returned to Jerusalem.
- 4) Musical instruments have been created
- 5) Clothing for the priests has been created as specified
- 6) The Temple Institute in Jerusalem has created a supply of the rich blue dye made from a specific mollusk found in the Red Sea that is needed to make the priest's garments used in Temple worship, and the blue fringes worn by Jewish males on the four corners of their garments in Temple worship
- 7) Possess ashes of the red heifer required for purifying; herds of red heifers being produced in Israel, U.S., and Finland
- 8) Have recovered from archeological digs in Israel the ancient ceremonial sacred oil used for anointing the priests.

Early Church Fathers

The Early Church Fathers taught that there would be a Temple rebuilt in the last days.

Divine Institutes by Lactanius, talks about a rebuilt Temple standing in the last days. “The Antichrist will attempt to destroy the Temple of God, persecutes the righteous people and there will be stress and tribulation such as there has never been or has been from the beginning of the world.”

Early church theologian, Victorianus, wrote in his commentary, *The Apocalypse* quoting Revelation 13 and says that there would be a false prophet who shall place a golden image or statue of Antichrist in the rebuilt Temple of God upon the illustrious holy mountain (The Temple Mount) at Jerusalem, and who would bring fire down from heaven.

Ireneas, another early church father, taught that there would be another physical Temple built by religious Jews, citing 2 Thess. 2:4. In his book, *Against Heresies*, Ireneas quotes Dan. 9:27 saying that the libation (sacrifices) will cease, and the *Abomination of Desolation* shall be brought into the Temple until the consummation (finish) of the Age.

According to Grant Jeffrey, for these prophetic events to occur, the legitimate third Temple must be rebuilt by the Jews. We do not have to be a genius to understand these things. These things will happen the way God says it is going to be!

Where should the Temple Be Built?

Is the Dome of the Rock the place as Gershon Solomon insists? Or should it be about 150 feet north of there, as Grant Jeffrey says?

In June 1967 Israeli archeologists began digging a 900 yard (2,700 ft.) tunnel in a northerly direction along the western wall of the Temple Mount. This tunnel is about 65 feet below the level of the present day streets of Jerusalem. It became known as the Rabbis' Tunnel.

In the past two decades, Grant Jeffery has visited numerous hidden areas beneath the Temple Mount. He has seen where Jewish archaeologists have exposed the original Herodian Foundation Stone, far beneath the level one stands upon, when visiting the Western Wall Plaza. Says Jeffrey, "Some of these gigantic blocks of limestone measure 46 ft. x 20 ft. x 20 ft. Each one can weigh up to 1,000 tons per block. The foundation stones are fitted so perfectly well together that it is impossible to fit even a razor blade between them. Some think that these are the foundation stones which were placed there directly by King Solomon himself."

Further evidence of the site of Solomon's Temple was unearthed in the early 1980's with the discovery of a previously unknown gate beneath the Temple Mount. As archeologists extended the Western Wall North Tunnel toward the North, several hundred feet north of Wilson's Arch on the western side, they uncovered an ancient gate that led eastward into passages beneath the Temple Mount. This had been built by Herod in the time of the Second Temple. Of particular interest is a passage that leads directly toward the location of The Beautiful Gate and the sealed Eastern Gate in the Temple Mount Wall.

On the Temple Mount, looking from the Mount of Olives to the East Wall there can be seen a huge square Gate in the Wall itself which is sealed, called the Eastern Gate.

Gershon Solomon asserted this gate was put there by the Turks. But archeologists found the original Eastern Gate *beneath* the present Eastern Gate. The Western Gate on the Western Wall is directly *due west of the location of the SEALED Eastern Gate and the Beautiful Gate of the Temple itself.*

A straight line drawn between these two gates strongly suggests that the location of the first and second Temples lies 150 feet north of the Dome of the Rock. In ancient times when looking through the gate, the building itself would be right behind the gate *in a direct line.* That gate then would lead right into the Temple itself, not veer off to the south.

A picture taken from the Garden of Gethsemane, directly opposite the closed Eastern Gate called the Golden Gate shows that the Dome of the Rock was built on a site more than 150 feet to the *south* of the original Temple site.

Today, a vast open area lies directly west of the Eastern Gate, between it and the Western Gate. The underground Western Gate was found filled with rocks and debris from destruction of the Second Temple.

Underground portions of the subterranean Western Wall of the Temple have helped researchers to determine the original location of the ancient Temple. One of these was a small gate (30" wide x 50" high) used as a special exit for defiled Levites priests and could be used after the main gate closed. It was described in the *Mishna Torah* as existing to the side of a massive larger gate that took 6 men to close.

The position of these ancient gates supports the theory that the first and second Temples were in fact directly opposite the Eastern Gate, called the Golden Gate. Also, found about 150 feet northwest of the Temple Mount was the remains of a great tower erected where the ancient Jews could throw stones down on those fighting at the Temple (close proximity) which would also suggest that the Temple was north of the Temple Mount.

An Ancient Cupola

The Golden or Eastern Gate is north of the Dome of the Rock. If you enter through the Golden Gate, and walk due west perpendicular to the eastern wall of the Temple Mount, you come to a little cupola over a flat rock. In Arab tradition, this cupola is known as the "Dome of the Tablets," presumably commemorating the site of the Tablets of the Law in the Holy of Holies. The stone is just one meter lower than es-Sakhra ('the Rock' in Arabic), the rock mass sheltered in the Dome of the Rock, the highest point on the Temple Mount.

The "Dome of the Tablets" has a flat surface, which could have borne the Ark of the Covenant easily. On the other hand, the stone inside the "Dome of the Rock," is very uneven and rough. Placing the Ark of the Covenant on the uneven surface of es-Shakhra, compared to the flat surface under the Dome of the Tablets, would seem to be rather precarious.

According to ancient Rabbinical sources, the Ark of the Covenant rested on the supposedly flat Foundation Stone (*Even ha-Shetiah*) in the Holy of Holies.

The Original LOCATION of the Temple

In the December 1990 issue of *Biblical Archaeologist*, Lawrence D. Sporty wrote a most amazing article supporting historically the evidence that the ancient Temple of God lay on the northern portion of the "Temple Mount," to the north of the present "Dome of the Rock."

Notice very carefully! In an article entitled "The Location of the Holy House of Herod's Temple: Evidence from the Pre-Destruction Period." Lawrence Sporty wrote:

"The holy house has most commonly been assumed to be located on the same

spot as the Moslem holy structure known as the Dome of the Rock. This assumption has been held for centuries for the following reasons: The rock outcropping under the Dome of the Rock is the main natural feature . . . the Dome of the Rock is centrally located within the esplanade, and, at 2,440 feet above sea level the Dome of the Rock is one of the highest points within the area. Although superficially appealing, these reasons do not withstand closer inspection . . .” (p.194).

Spotty points out that this assumption was challenged in the middle of the nineteenth century by Thomas Barclay, an American missionary. He wrote that the Holy Place was forty cubits long and twenty wide, and the Holy of Holies only twenty cubits square. *Therefore, the huge rock within the Dome of the Rock -- which is sixty feet from north to south and fifty-five feet east to west -- could not even begin to fit inside either one of those two compartments of the ancient Temple!*

Notice that again: This rock, inside the Dome of the Rock, is SIXTY FEET LONG, north to south, and FIFTY FIVE FEET WIDE!

In the Scriptures we read concerning the Holy of Holies: “And the oracle [Holy of Holies] in the forepart was twenty cubits in length and twenty cubits in breadth, and twenty cubits in the height thereof” (I Kings 6:20). A Hebrew cubit is about 18 inches in length, or a foot and a half. Therefore twenty cubits square would be approximately *thirty feet in both directions!*

Now, tell me – how can a huge, mammoth, irregularly shaped rock *65 by 55 feet* ever fit into a cubicle which is *only 30 feet by 30 feet*?

This huge rock, which I have walked around, is enormous. It is the traditional site where Abraham offered up his son Isaac as a sacrifice to God, but was stopped from actually doing so by the Angel of the Lord (Gen.22). This great historical event foreshadowed the offering up of the Son of God, Yeshua the Messiah, by God the Father, as atonement for all the sins of mankind. It is my belief that Yahveh would desire all generations of mankind to be able to look upon that rock, and think of its significance, when they visit Jerusalem – and not keep it hidden in the “holy of holies”!

Barclay also pointed out that the rock was not high enough, being only fifteen feet above the surrounding ground. The floor of the Court of the Priests was about forty feet above the general level. The Talmud, he pointed out, stated the Holy House was reared upon a substructure of masonry forty feet in thickness!

Lawrence Spotty, in his article, also points out the intriguing fact that according to the first century Jewish historian Josephus, the Second Temple lay in very close proximity to the Antonia Fortress, which rose up on the northwestern corner of the Temple Mount. Josephus says this fortress was built on a rock 50 cubits high and dominated the Temple (*Wars of the Jews*, bk.5,5,8). Just such a rock is located at the northwestern corner of the Temple Mount, today!

The famous letter of Aristeas, written between 150 and 100 B.C., which tells us the history of the translation of the Scriptures known as the Septuagint, also describes his visit to the Temple. In it, Aristeas says he entered the “neighboring citadel” that was “situated on a lofty site . . . fortified with towers . . . for the protection of the area around the Temple,” so he could get a *good view* of the priests *below* conducting the sacrifices. This implies, obviously, that the citadel had to be higher than and very close to the area where sacrifices were performed, at the altar within the Temple!

The Antonia Fortress

Josephus says in *Wars of the Jews* that the Antonia fortress had towers at its four corners. The largest was at the southeast corner, 70 cubits [105 feet] in height, “from which the whole Temple might be viewed” (Bk.5,5,8). Troops were stationed in the Antonia fortress to guard the Temple and for crowd control. This would have been very easily done with the Temple adjacent to the fortress, as Josephus says it was, and if it had been built in the northwestern area of the Temple Mount.

However, if the Temple had been located where the Dome of the Rock now stands, the utility of the Antonia fortress for crowd control would have been compromised. The distance would have made it very difficult to maintain any effective control, much less to prevent riots.

According to Josephus:

“Now, as to the tower of Antonia, it was situated at the corner of the two cloisters of the court of the Temple; of that on the west and that on the north; it was erected on a rock of fifty cubits in height, and was on a great precipice; it was the work of King Herod. . . and as the entire structure resembled that of a tower, it contained also four other distinct towers at its four corners; whereof the others were but fifty cubits high; whereas that which lay upon the southeast corner was seventy cubits high, that from thence the whole Temple might be viewed; but on the corner where *it joined to the two cloisters of the Temple*, it had passages down to them both, through which the guard (for there always lay in this tower a Roman legion) went several ways among the cloisters, with their arms, on the Jewish festivals, in order to watch the people . . . for the Temple was a fortress that guarded the city, as was the tower of Antonia *a guard to the Temple. . .*” (*Wars*, bk.5, 5, 8).

Josephus was an eye-witness to the Roman siege of the Temple in 70 A.D. Josephus records that he and the Roman General Titus spoke from Antonia fortress to the Jewish fighters at the Temple, asking them to surrender to avoid unnecessary bloodshed.

This shows the Temple must have been very close to the fortress for the Romans to have been heard by the Jewish fighters. If the Temple had been located where the Dome of the Rock stands, a distance of 720 feet, they could scarcely have been heard at all by the defenders of the Jewish resistance.

Fighting between Jews and Romans broke out soon after the Romans seized the Antonia fortress. Josephus records:

“So a terrible battle was fought at the entrance of the Temple, while the Romans were forcing their way, in order to get possession of that Temple, and the Jews were driving them *back to the tower of Antonia*; which

battle the darts *were on both sides useless, as well as the spears*, and both sides drew their swords, and fought it out hand to hand. Now during this struggle the positions of the men were undistinguished on both sides, and they fought at random, the men being inter-mixed one with another, and confounded, *by reason of the narrowness of the place*. . . . Great slaughter was now made on both sides, and the combatants trod upon the bodies and armor of those that were dead, and dashed them to pieces” (*Wars*, Bk.6, 1,7).

How plain it is that the Temple must have been very close by, and the Temple cloisters even adjacent to the tower of Antonia at the northwest corner of the Temple Mount! There was not even enough room for soldiers to use darts or spears -- only hand-to-hand combat with swords could be engaged in because of the tight and narrow confines of the place.

The battle raged so ferociously from 3:00 AM in the morning till 1:00 PM in the afternoon, that the Romans decided to take possession of the tower of Antonia alone. But at that point, a powerful Roman centurion leaped into the fray and by himself drove the Jews before him, forcing them to back up to the corner of the inner court of the Temple. He was eventually killed for his bold prowess, but the Romans were satisfied to control only the tower of Antonia for the time being, terrified of suffering more slaughter and carnage.

This account of the Jewish eye-witness historian Josephus shows beyond doubt that the Temple was not some 720 feet away from the tower, but very close at hand. From his vantage point in the Antonia tower, Titus could see all the fighting close at hand, as if he had a front row box seat at a theater (Wars, bk.6, 2, 5-6).

Herod's Construction Project

Why, then, does so much of the Temple Mount lie to the south of that area, today? How did the Dome of the Rock come to be located in the “middle” of the current Temple Mount?

King Herod was famous for his mighty building projects, a great builder of his time. It was his desire to win over the religious Jews to support his reign. He concocted a plan to expand and beautify the Temple of Zerubbabel, and to expand the Temple Mount itself. He actually did so much work on the Temple, that it began to be called “Herod’s Temple.”

Josephus tells us king Herod not only rebuilt the tower of Antonia, but also “rebuilt the Temple. In doing so he added a piece of land about it and enclosed it with a wall, making the area *TWICE AS LARGE as that before enclosed*. We read in *Wars of the Jews*, book 1, chapter 21, part 1:

“Accordingly, in the fifteenth year of his reign, Herod rebuilt the Temple, and encompassed a piece of land about it with a wall; which land was *TWICE AS LARGE AS THAT BEFORE ENCLOSED*. The expenses he laid out upon it were vastly large also, and the riches about it were unspeakable. A sign of which you have in the great cloisters that were erected about the Temple and the citadel which were on its north side.”

In a footnote to this passage, Whiston states that this “citadel” was the Fortress Antonia and lay on the northwest side of the Temple and was one fourth as large.

Since the fortress of Antonia was situated at the northwest corner of the Temple Mount and no construction was done north of that point, and since the east side of the Temple Mount is abruptly met by the deep ravine of the valley of Jehoshaphat -- the Kidron valley -- the only direction this doubling of the Temple Mount could have gone is *SOUTHWARD!*

Says Lawrence D. Sporty:

“If Herod doubled the size of the esplanade, he could only have done so by *moving the southern retaining wall nearly twice as far south and extending the eastern wall south to join it*. . . There is, of course, archaeological evidence that the esplanade was extended southward -- the presence of extensive subterranean vaults underlying this portion of the esplanade originally constructed by David and later rebuilt as the Stables of Solomon. . . *Herod’s doubling of the size of the esplanade would have placed the holy house in the northern half of the newly enlarged esplanade*” (p. 198, *Biblical Archaeologist*, 4 Dec. 1990).

The Dome of the Rock mosque, and the As-Sakhra Rock inside it – which I have viewed and walked around – would apparently be located inside the new area of construction, developed and expanded under king Herod about the time of Christ! Therefore, this is further evidence that *the original Temple of Solomon and the Second Temple of Zerubbabel were not located on the site of the Dome of the Rock*.

Herod’s Plot

This clear historical evidence proves that the Dome of the Rock is not within the boundaries of the *original* Temple Mount at all! It rests upon an area which was added to the original Temple Mount by king Herod who sought to impress the Jews with his lavish philanthropy.

It was a calculated plot on Herod’s part to make Jerusalem like other major cities

in the Roman Empire, with a central bazaar and “marketplace” adjacent to the Temple! Herod was, unknown to the Jews, actually continuing a process of *Hellenization*, which he had begun in building such cities as Caesarea, a Grecian style city on the coast.

Plainly, the southern half of the present-day “Temple Mount” is not “holy.” It was not part of the original Temple Mount of the days of Solomon, Zerubabel, and the first and second Temple periods, prior to Herod’s time.

The southern half of the esplanade was added by Herod to transform the very nature of the remote, holy site into a cosmopolitan, commercial center, with open plazas reminiscent of Hellenistic civic centers. Herod sought to “mainstream” the Jews into the Roman-Hellenistic world of that time. He was seeking “assimilation.” His Temple expansion project was a clever part of his conspiracy to derail the Jewish people and separate them from the Torah, and the religion of their forefathers.

Herod did this secretly, however, so as not to alert the sensitive, religious Jews to his purposes. He utilized cunning intrigue. He gave a religious-sounding purpose for his building plans, couching them in Biblical terms, so that he caught the Jewish leaders off-guard and proceeded with his plans without any significant opposition. The southern half of the Temple Mount became a gathering place for

“the civic, legal, commercial, and religious activities of the city. Together with the many porticoes, the royal *stoa*, and other nearby administrative buildings, shops, palaces, and monuments built just outside the esplanade, this general area of the city became the kind of civic center characteristic of a Greek agora or a Roman forum” (*ibid*, *Biblical Archaeology Review*, Lawrence Sparty, p.200).

Herod brought in Gentile mercantilism, trade and social functions to the Temple Mount. He introduced a “shopping Mall” concept adjacent to the very Temple of God. No wonder Yeshua, with divine fury, exploded in wrath and overthrew the tables of the moneychangers, and drove out the goats and sheep, being “sold” in this high-pressure “religious” shopping Mall!

Yeshua Himself opposed the gross and insensitive commercialization of this area. The apostle John tells us about one occasion when He visited the Temple Mount during the Passover season. “When it was almost time for the Jewish Passover, Jesus went up to Jerusalem. In the temple courts he found men selling cattle, sheep and doves, and others sitting at tables exchanging money. So he made a whip out of cords, and drove all from the temple area, both sheep and cattle; he scattered the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables. To those who sold doves, he said, ‘Get these out of here! How dare you turn my Father's house into a market!’” (John 2:13-16, NIV; see also Matt.21:12-13).

Declares Lawrence Sparty:

“This conflicted with the more traditional view of the sacred, unapproachable

mountain in Jewish thought. It is no wonder, then, that in giving the dimensions of the Har Habbayit, Mishnah *Middot* does not recognize the area of the esplanade constructed by Herod as part of the sacred place. Previously isolated, the Temple Mount was now surrounded by public structures and secular activities. The area became a public gathering place. . . This area also became a point of contact, and, therefore, a focus of conflict between the conservative elements of the Jewish population and Greco-Roman culture. Religious riots broke out repeatedly in this area” (*ibid.*, p.201-202).

Solomon’s Preparations for Destruction of the Temple

God told Solomon that the Temple would eventually be destroyed, so King Solomon and the priests dug special chambers underground to hide Temple treasures in special secret chambers under the Temple Mount. These included the oil of anointing, the rod of Aaron, and the pot of manna along with the Ark of the Covenant.

This was recorded by Maimonides. Israel was told, “Put the Holy Ark in the house [chamber] which Solomon, the son of David, king of Israel, built” (II Chron.35:3). All of these sacred articles were not returned to their place in the second Temple rebuilt by Zerubabel.

Several different passages in the Old Testament say that the Temple will be rebuilt as prophesied. Amos declares, “On that day I will raise up the tabernacle of David, which has fallen down, and repair its damages; I will raise up its ruins, and rebuild it as in the days of old” (Amos 9:11). Haggai declares of the end-time Temple, “The glory of this latter temple shall be greater than the former, says the Lord of Hosts” (Haggai 2:9).

Haggai speaks of the latter end-time house being *greater* than the former because Messiah is going to come back to it.

Malachi declares, “Behold, I send My messenger, and he will prepare the way before Me. And the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to His temple; even the Messenger of the covenant, in whom you delight. Behold, He is coming, says the Lord of hosts” (Mal.3:1).

The Red Heifer

During these last days there is going to be a Temple built. There will be an altar with priests doing daily sacrifices. In order to rebuild the Temple on the contaminated Temple Mount it must be decontaminated (cleansed) with the ashes of the red heifer which pictures Jesus Christ (see Numbers 19). Christ paid the penalty for our sins by dying for us. He is the only One who qualifies to cleanse this earth and everything in it.

Further proof of the Temple being on the north of the Dome of the Rock comes from the *Mishna Torah* in regard to the red heifer sacrifice. It says that on the day of the sacrifice of the red heifer (without blemish) the priest could see the sacred veil of the

inner Temple while standing on the Mount of Olives, the site where he stood to do the sacrifice. This could only occur, if the original Temple was located on a DIRECT EAST-WEST line projecting due west from the sacrificial site to the Eastern Gate (The Golden Gate). This means that the Temple had to be due west of the line drawn from the Mount of Olives where the red heifer was sacrificed and burned to ashes. The line of sight went straight through the Eastern Gate (Golden Gate), then the Beautiful Gate, through the Temple and then to the Western Gate of the Levites.

That is also the spot where Christ himself was sacrificed. There have been about nine red heifer sacrifices throughout the entire history of Israel from the time of the Temple's building to the end times.

James Fleming was a respected teacher working at a college near Bethlehem. In April of 1969 he was photographing the sealed Eastern Gate. A prolonged rainy season had softened the ground in front of the gate an area occupied by a centuries-old Arab cemetery. As he walked backward, the ground gave way, causing him to fall unconscious into an ancient necropolis (graveyard). When he awoke a few minutes later surrounded by graves and markers, he was directly in front of the original Eastern Gate (Golden) that was part of the first Temple wall!

The subterranean Eastern Gate therefore is beneath the present sealed Eastern Gate. That means that this is the correct Gate the Messiah will come through and it is right in front of where the original Temple stood looking due west. This is 150 feet north of the Dome of the Rock.

There is another gate 150 feet to the south, but it is not the location of the Eastern Gate.

This means that the Jews could rebuild the Temple of God at the right location, right on the Temple Mount where the two previous Temple's stood without tearing down the Dome of the Rock! This would fulfill the prophecy of the court yard being given to the Gentiles (Rev.11:2).

The Sanhedrin

The Sanhedrin is necessary to issue the rulings about sacred rituals, sacrifices, qualifications for being in the Temple services done by the Levitical priesthood, and other matters pertaining to the rebuilding of the Temple.

On October 13, 2004, 71 of the most highly respected Rabbis in Israel were specially ordained in Tiberius as the new Sanhedrin. The modern day Sanhedrin was formed in Jerusalem, January 20, 2005, and they are to meet monthly. It was foretold that in the end-of-days the Sanhedrin would be renewed in Tiberius, and from there it would be relocated to Jerusalem, just as it has happened.

The Sanhedrin is investigating: 1) sacrifice of a lamb during a future Passover, 2) the training of priests in the rituals of ancient animal sacrifices, and 3) reinstating the Sanhedrin's religious authority to announce each month by the sighting of the new moon ("rosh chodesh") from Jerusalem—as it was done in ancient times from Moses through the time of the apostles.

Additional meetings were held by the Sanhedrin in January 2005 to discuss the appropriate rules for rebuilding the Temple. Critical issues are the discussing of the 1) original location of first and second Temples and hence the location where the new Temple must be built, 2) the altar of sacrifice, 3) the precise length of the Biblical cubit, and 4) the return of the lost 10 tribes of Israel.

Maimonides wrote that *not one* of the commandments of the Torah is dependent upon the Messiah's arrival. Many of the 613 commandments in the Torah deal with Temple worship.

Says Grant Jeffrey, "So logically it follows, according to Maimonides teaching, that the Third Temple could and will be rebuilt *before* the appearance of the Messiah and the establishment of the kingdom of David."

The Jews have already gathered prefabricated and disassembled portions for the Temple which are stored and ready for rapid assembly in rebuilding of the third Temple in the "manner of King David". The Jews will be ready when the time comes. The new Sanhedrin plans to quarry necessary materials and stone off site, and quickly assemble in silence the stones on the Temple Mount when God provides the *sign* that the time has come.

How Soon?

We read in Matthew 24 a key to knowing the time of the end and how soon the Temple will be built. Notice, Christ says, "Now *learn* this parable from the fig tree: When its branch has already become tender and puts forth leaves, you know that summer is near. So you also, when you see all these things, know that it is near—at the doors!" (Matt.24:32-33).

Scripture shows that the fig tree is Israel. When the fig tree puts forth leaves, you know that summer is near. So also, when we see all these things described in this chapter, we know that the second coming of the Messiah is near, AT THE VERY DOORS!

Christ went on, "Assuredly I say to you, THIS GENERATION will by no means pass away till all these things take place" (verse 34).

By context, He is referring to the generation *that sees* the rebirth of the nation of Israel in the latter days and sees these things coming to pass! The fig tree represents Israel. The United Nations voted in October 1947 to divide up the holy land between the

Jews and Arabs, thus enabling the establishment of a new Jewish state in Palestine. Modern Israel became a nation May 14, 1948.

How long, then, is this end-time “generation”?

We read in Psalm 90:10, “The days of our lives are seventy years; and if by reason of strength they are eighty years, yet their boast is only labor and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away.”

Since the days of our lives are 70 years, this implies one generation (complete) is 70 years! If we add 70 to 1947, we come to AD 2017!

Verse 12 goes on, “So teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom.”

The UN voted to partition Palestine in the fall of 1947. Israel was reestablished as a nation in 1948. If 70 years (one generation) is added to 1947 (birth as a nation) it brings us to the year to 2017 as the end of the 70 years. So “this generation” would be between “1947-1948” and 70 years later, or AD 2017-2018.

This year, 2009, is eight years before 2017. What does this all mean?

It strongly implies that Christ is coming soon, perhaps by 2017 or 2018 at the latest, although time could be cut short (Matt.24:22).

Soon, therefore, we can expect to see the Temple of God once again being rebuilt in Jerusalem, upon the Temple Mount!

It may seem “logical” to many that the Temple itself would be in the “center” of the Temple Mount, as the Dome of the Rock is situated. But is this necessarily the case? There are two Scriptures which indicate otherwise. They strongly suggest the Temple should be and is located in the *NORTHERN AREA of the Temple Mount*. Notice!

“Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is mount Zion, *on the sides of the NORTH*, the city of the great king” (Psalms 48:2).

“For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, *in the sides of the NORTH* . . . I will be like the most High” (Isaiah 14:13-14).

This shows the Temple was to be located in the NORTH SIDE of the Temple Mount. The physical things were to be *patterned* after the heavenly (Exo.25:40; Num.8:4).

WHY is it that for almost 40 years, since the Jews regained access to the Temple Mount, the Temple has NOT been built? Could it be that God has not blessed the efforts because they are headed in the wrong direction? – that is, He has not opened the doors for the reconstruction of the Temple because many think to build it at the WRONG LOCATION?

Of course, this would be a fundamental, egregious error. Could it be that God has NOT YET OPENED THE DOOR *for the simple reason that those who want to rebuild it simply have not yet come to understand WHERE the Temple should be built?*

The situation in the Middle East appears to be an unsolvable problem, vexing all nations. What is the solution? Could it be that the solution is SPIRITUAL – not physical? That is, let the Arabs have their Dome of the Rock, but divide control of the Temple Mount giving Israel the northern half and the Arabs the southern half?

On the surface, it appears the Middle East problem, and the hatred of Arabs against the Jews, in an intractable, snarled “Gordion knot.” However, this impasse can be solved. Perhaps the true answer lies in a fair settlement of the Temple Mount issue. That is, rebuilding the Temple might be negotiable with the Arabs, given the proper “quid pro quo.” I propose that the Temple Mount issue is really negotiable. It is the heart of every other issue and problem. Get to the heart of the matter, and all the other issues will work themselves out.

Every business transaction should have something of perceived “value” to both parties of the transaction. If the Jews “grudgingly” give in to the Arab demand that the Arabs control the Dome of the Rock and the temple mount southward of that point – in exchange for Jewish control of the northern portion of the mount, including the area Kaufman believes is the original site of the previous temples – both sides would benefit. A “modus operandi” could be found to satisfy both sides. Considering the facts on the ground, the Arabs might be most accommodating to this sort of division, since they would “think” they are getting the best end of the bargain – but in reality they would only be getting the portion of the temple site which was ADDED by king Herod during his vast building program and expansion of the original site!

This solution will require some “re-thinking” on the part of those Jewish people who insist that the House of God must be built where the Dome of the Rock now stands. But such thinking *can* be changed, with facts, logic, and truth.

“Build My House!”

God thunders to His people, today, “Then the word of the LORD came by Haggai the prophet, saying, ‘Is it time for you yourselves to dwell in your paneled houses, and this temple to lie in ruins? Now therefore, thus says the LORD of hosts: “Consider your ways! You have sown much, and bring in little; you eat, but do not have enough; you drink, but are not filled with drink; you clothe yourselves, but no one is warm; and he

who earns wages, earns wages to put into a bag with holes.’ Thus says the LORD of hosts: Consider your ways!

“Go up to the mountains and bring wood and BUILD THE TEMPLE, that I may take pleasure in it and be glorified, says the LORD” (Haggai 1:5-8).

How long will the Jews defy God, and refuse to rebuild His House? How long will they continue ignoring His commandment?

During the time between now and the end of this age, the Temple of God must be rebuilt in Jerusalem.

Malachi, the Lord’s messenger, states unequivocally: “And the Lord, whom you seek, will SUDDENLY COME to *His temple, even the Messenger of the covenant, in whom you delight. Behold, He is coming*” (Mal.3:1).

How shall He come to His Temple *if it does not even exist?*

Note that when He comes, He is going to come “*QUICKLY!*” “*SUDDENLY!*”

The Word of God says, “For thus says the LORD of hosts: ‘Once more (it is a little while) I will shake heaven and earth, the sea and dry land; and I will shake all Nations, and they shall come to the Desire of all nations, and I will fill this temple with glory,’ says the LORD of hosts” (Haggai 2:6-7).

Almighty God thunders, “I will shake heaven and earth, I will overthrow the throne of kingdoms; I will destroy the strength of the Gentile kingdoms. I will overthrow the chariots and those who ride in them; the horses and their riders shall come down, every one by the sword of his brother” (Haggai 2:22).

The House of God yet remains to be built. Until it is, curses are promised upon Israel, their land, livelihood, and productivity. God thunders, “You looked for much, but indeed it came to little; and when you brought it home, I blew it away. Why? Says the LORD of hosts. ‘*Because of My House that is in ruins, while every one of you runs to his own house. Therefore the heavens above you withhold the dew, and the earth withholds its fruit. For I called for a drought on the land and the mountains, on the grain and the new wine and the oil, on whatever the ground brings forth, on men and livestock, and on all the labor of your hands*’” (Haggai 1:9-11).

Hear the Word of the Lord, you leaders of Israel, the nations, and the world! The time has come to set about to REBUILD THE HOUSE OF GOD, so prophecy can be fulfilled, and the Messiah can come back to His dwelling Place!

A word to the wise is sufficient!