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01

A BRIEF TEMPLE HISTORY

According to the Bible, the original site of the two ancient Jewish Temples was Mount Moriah, where Abraham built an altar to offer up his son Isaac in obedience to God's command recorded in the Book of Genesis.

This is the same mountain top that King David chose as the site on which the First Temple should be constructed. David bought from Araunah his threshing floor and the surrounding area because it was the location where he confessed his sin of numbering the army of Israel and the place where the plague was stopped. King David paid Araunah 600 shekels of gold for the site and declared:

Here shall be the house of the Lord God and here the altar of burnt offering for Israel.

(1Chronicles 22:1)

The First Jewish Temple was built by King Solomon in around 957 B.C. and was destroyed by the Babylonians in 586 B.C. The Second Temple was built initially by the Jews after their return to Jerusalem from their Babylonian captivity in 536 B.C.

This Temple, completed in 516 B.C. and totally refurbished and enlarged by King Herod beginning in 18 B.C., was utterly destroyed by the Romans in A.D. 70 in an amazing fulfilment of Jesus' prophecies in the Gospel of Matthew, Mark and Luke.

For the religious Jews, the destruction of Jerusalem and the Second Temple was the worst disaster that could befall them, as the whole sacrificial system was terminated with its destruction. They were left with only the Torah, the synagogue and the rabbinical commentary writings in the Talmud to express devotion.

Many rabbis have claimed that God never changed His command that Israel build a sanctuary for Him to dwell in and therefore His command still remains in force today.

Consequently, over the last few decades in Israel a number of Jews have been making developments which we are informed will result in the construction of a Third Temple on the ancient foundations that King Solomon put in place centuries ago, and will involve the re-establishment of the ancient sacrificial and worship system described in the Law of Moses.

We are also told the long-term objective is to make the Temple Mount the moral and spiritual centre of Israel, of the Jewish people and of the entire world, in an attempt to establish the promised Kingdom of God on Earth, as they await the coming of the promised “messiah.”

Different People Involved

Those who are working actively towards this goal do not only include religious Jews, but represent many influential Jewish architects, engineers, political leaders, and not a small number of Evangelical Christians and Christian Organizations worldwide.

As estimations showed the Third Temple will cost billions and will certainly be the most expensive construction project in history, these secular people and organizations have also given much financial support.

Funds were also established to collect donations for the project, and over the last century millions of dollars have been donated in trusts and wills by Jews and Christians who desire to help finance the construction!

However, not all Christians, and not all secular and religious Jews in Israel and around the world, agree with the construction of a Third Temple, and with it having any real significance to end-time biblical prophecy.

A Variety of Sentiments!

Jewish sentiments about the rebuilding of a Third Temple can be divided into three categories. The first we have mentioned above. The second are those who do not consider the issue at all. This is not surprising, since a large per-cent of Jews worldwide today are not religious.

This group rejoices in the importance of having the Jewish State, and in visiting the Holy Land to pray at the Wailing Wall, but this is a far cry from contemplating a rebuilt Temple in Jerusalem. In addition, many in this category are not in favour because they believe that such an act would provoke war with their Muslim neighbours.

The third are some Orthodox religious Jews who pray daily for the Temple's reconstruction, but that it will happen in the Messianic Age. These strongly object to the rebuilding of the

Temple by anyone other than the Messiah. They point to the Messianic message of the Prophet Zechariah where he predicted:

Here is a man whose name is Branch: for he shall branch out in his place, and he shall build the temple of the Lord.

(Zechariah 6:12)

The central prayer in their daily prayer service is called the *amidah*. It is also called the *shemoneh esreh*, which means *eighteen*, because there were originally eighteen major petitions and benedictions in this prayer.

A number of these relate to the coming of Messiah, the redemption of the people of Israel, and the rebuilding of the Temple, which are closely related concepts in Judaism. However, all this is a matter for prayer rather than of human effort, other than the effort of religious Jews to observe the Law of Moses and by doing so, hasten the redemption plan.

IMPORTANT OBSTACLES NOW REMOVED

In this chapter, we will show just a few of the most important obstacles reported to have now been removed that will permit the Jewish leaders to realize their goals.

The Temple Institute in the Old City of Jerusalem is just one of the many Israeli groups that for decades has been preparing for this. This group of Orthodox rabbis inform the public that they have been actively working in the Old City of Jerusalem to train Levite priests, and to create the ancient Temple worship vessels and musical instruments, which will be necessary to reinstate sacred worship and animal sacrifice.

The Institute has constructed over seventy-five objects and vessels as well as linen priestly garments required for Temple services. To view some of these objects that have already been made, or to leave a donation, you can visit their website. Here is a brief extract of how they describe their work, published decades ago:

Today, at the Temple Institute in Jerusalem, Biblical prophecy is being fulfilled. Here, you can see something which has not been seen on the face of the earth for 2000 years. In preparation for the Third Temple, the Temple Institute has created authentic Temple vessels and priestly garments according to Biblical specifications.

This is an ongoing process and to date over 60 sacred objects have been recreated from gold, silver and copper. These vessels are not models or replicas but they are actually made according to all the complicated nuances and requirements of Biblical law. If the Holy Temple were to be rebuilt immediately, the Divine service could be resumed utilizing these vessels.

In addition to its work on the recreation of the Temple vessels, the Institute is conducting a number of related research projects. These include the importation of authentic Red Heifers to Israel in preparation for the ritual purification detailed in Numbers 19.

Other tasks include the identification and gathering together of all 11 ingredients of the incense offering, and the long and exhaustive research in identifying the stones of the High Priest's breastplate – the Urim and Thummin.

There is even advanced work being done by technicians and architects, using sophisticated computer technology, to design actual blueprints for the Third Temple.

There is also an Orthodox Jewish group called *Netemanei Har Habayit* – the *Faithful of the Temple Mount* – that has already built a detailed model of the Temple.

Besides the training of the Levitical Priesthood, and the construction of many of the sacred vessels and linen robes to be used in worship services, many other obstacles are said to have now been removed.

THE SANHEDRIN

We are told that for a long time many wondered about a Third Temple being built because of the numerous obstacles that stood in the way. Not only do mosques, shrines and other holy Muslim sites occupy the Temple Mount, within Judaism itself there were some major problems.

For one, the Jews could not think of rebuilding the ancient Temple or resuming worship unless the Sanhedrin Court, the highest body of Jewish lawmakers, was reconvened.

The Jewish Sanhedrin was founded during the Exodus from Egypt when God ordered Moses to assemble seventy elders from all the tribes of Israel to share the responsibility of leading the people (see *Numbers 11:16*).

The Sanhedrin Council held all legislative and judicial powers from the time of the Exodus until the Babylonian army destroyed Israel's sovereignty and the First Temple in 586 B.C.

When the Jewish exiles returned to Jerusalem from Babylon seventy years later, Ezra the scribe reinstated the Sanhedrin to provide guidance for the people before they began work on the Second Temple, and it continued until 453 A.D., when the Court met for the last time in the town of Tiberias, Israel.

Many rabbis say that before a Third Temple could be built, the Sanhedrin is necessary to re-establish the authentic Levitical Priesthood, to train the priests in the ancient rituals of animal sacrifice and to identify the correct location for the construction of the Temple.

Apparently, this obstacle was removed when seventy-one of the most respected rabbis in Israel received ordination as the new Sanhedrin in October 2004, that included Orthodox Jewish leaders from every part of Israel.

The modern-day re-constituted Sanhedrin was formally convened in Jerusalem on January 20, 2005, where it is said they discussed the appropriate rules for rebuilding the Temple and the resumption of Temple worship.

THE OIL OF ANOINTING

The Oil of Anointing was very important in Israel's worship. It was used to anoint the kings of Israel, the Temple, the High Priest, the Ark of the Covenant and many other vessels.

During the Exodus, God instructed Moses to create the Oil of Anointing using five special ingredients. One of the five ingredients of this Anointing Oil was the rare *persimmon* or balsam oil, known as *afarsimon*.

It is believed there were actually only two groves in the whole of the Middle East where the afarsimon oil grew – one in Jericho and another in a wadi near En Gedi on the west side of the Dead Sea.

It is said that when the Romans were about to destroy Jerusalem and the Temple, the Jewish priests burned these two groves of balsam trees to keep the sacred Oil of Anointing out of enemy hands.

For a long time, Jewish scholars argued that the inability to create the biblical Oil of Anointing, due to the loss of this particular species of balsam, would prevent them from ever rebuilding the Temple and resuming the worship services. It appears that all this changed with the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls.

Out of the thousands of documents and portions of manuscripts discovered in the caves at the Dead Sea, all of them were written on parchment or leather, with the exception of one single scroll that was made from copper.

This rolled up scroll was composed of three copper sheets riveted together to form a single sheet. The metallic manuscript, discovered in 1953 and officially named *3Q15*, based on the cave in which it was found, became known as the *Copper Scroll*.

The Copper Scroll had deteriorated over the years, but after several years of restoration work, an archaeologist managed to unroll the brittle metal and gain access to the writing.

The author of the Copper Scroll had used chisels to engrave Hebrew letters into the copper sheet which is said to contain a detailed list of sixty-four secret locations where the Jewish Essenes had hidden the gold and silver treasures of the Temple during the Roman siege of Jerusalem in 68 A.D.

The buried treasures mentioned on the list includes a number of sacred Temple vessels, manuscripts, gold and silver bullion, the Oil of Anointing and the Breastplate of the High Priest.

Truth or Tales?

Reports reveal that some archaeologists initially concluded that the Copper Scroll's list of hidden treasures and artefacts was nothing more than a mythological and fanciful tale of buried treasure. One of the reasons for their rejection was because of the value of the treasures described.

Others believed the list to be authentic and in April 1988, a team of archaeologists, led by Dr Joseph Patrich of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, began a search near Qumran to recover the sacred Oil of Anointing.

Using information found on the Copper Scroll the team searched Cave II in Qumran and found a small clay vessel of five inches in height which contained oil that was solidified as a gelatin-like substance.

The clay jar had been wrapped in palm leaves and was buried deep in a pit, that was obviously intended to protect the oil from the extreme temperatures in the Dead Sea caves.

We are informed that when this ancient oil was analysed by scientists – using carbon 14 dating – it proved to be composed of five specific ingredients, just like those God commanded Moses to use in the creation of the sacred Oil of Anointing described in the Book of Exodus.

Further intensive testing from the Pharmaceutical Department of the Hebrew University established that the oil inside this clay vessel was indeed the ancient Oil of Anointing.

This find was reported in 1989 by the *New York Times*. We are told that with the discovery of this ancient sample of the Oil of Anointing, it makes it possible to anoint the Third Temple, the sacred vessels, the priests, the Ark of the Covenant, the Table of Shewbread, the Incense Altar, the Altar of Burnt Offering and, ultimately, the Messiah. The ancient Oil of Anointing discovered in Cave II is said to be now in the possession of two chief rabbis of Israel.

THE EXACT LOCATION

Another problematic obstacle to the rebuilding of the Temple on Mount Moriah is the location of the famous Muslim Shrine, known as the *Dome of the Rock*. This is the third holiest place in the world for Muslims after Mecca and Medina.

According to Islamic tradition, the Temple Mount in Jerusalem is the place from which Muhammad ascended to Heaven on his night journey. The famous Dome covers the rock where Muhammad allegedly left his footprint as he leaped to Heaven.

The Dome was erected by Caliph Abdal-Malik in A.D. 691, following the Arab conquest of Palestine, and is said to be located in the very centre of the thirty-five-acre Temple Mount.

Since the 1967 Six Day War, Israel has had control over the entire City of Jerusalem, including the hotly debated Temple Mount. However, Israeli authorities permitted the Supreme Muslim Religious Council, a Jordanian-controlled Muslim trust known as the *WAQF*, to control religious activities and to police without firearms all other activities on the Temple Mount, the area of the location of the Muslim Dome of the Rock and the Al-Aqsa Mosque.

Not as Previously Believed

For almost thirteen centuries the common belief was that the Muslim's Dome of the Rock Shrine was built directly over the sight of the original Temple of Solomon and Herod. So for a Third Temple to be constructed, this Dome would have to be removed.

This caused some Christians to suggest that a disaster such as an earthquake or a missile would be necessary to remove the Muslim Dome of the Rock to allow the Temple to be built.

Others suggested that one of the specifications of the agreement between Israel and the coming Antichrist is that he will allow the Jews to demolish the Muslim Shrine to clear the location for the Temple and allow the daily sacrifices to begin again. They believe that this act will infuriate the Muslim community and be the driving force behind the War of Gog and Magog.

Seemingly, archaeological excavations over the last few decades, which includes the discovery of a number of buried ancient gates, are said to prove these assumptions to be incorrect.

This archaeological evidence indicates that the Dome of the Rock and the Al-Aqsa Mosque do not occupy the location of the ancient Jewish Temple, but indicate it to be an open area directly north of the Dome of the Rock, opposite the Eastern Gate.

The Dome of the Tablets

The location of a small Arabic cupola known as *Qubbat al-Arwah*, the *Dome of the Spirits*, or the *Dome of the Tablets*, is believed to bear further witness to this fact.

The Dome of the Tablets is a small dome built on a foundation stone composed of the bedrock of Mount Moriah and is located north of the Dome of the Rock, almost directly opposite the sealed Eastern Gate.

Some suggest the two names given to this structure may indicate knowledge that this stone is the foundation stone that supported the Ark of the Covenant. The Ark of the Covenant contained the Tablets of the Law and was kept in the Holy of Holies in Solomon's Temple.

Apparently, the Mishneh Torah records that there was a foundation stone in Solomon's Temple known as *Even ha-Shetiyah*, and that the Ark rested on these stones.



The Dome of the Tablets

In light of this evidence, the Third Temple could be built on the exact location of Solomon's Temple without disturbing the Dome of the Rock or the Al-Aqsa Mosque. Both these Muslim structures occupy the area that was previously the Court of the Gentiles.

Not as Previously Believed at all!

It is noteworthy that many scholars of various fields believe the Wailing Wall is not a part of the foundation wall of the old Temple as many believe, but that it is actually the wall of the old Roman Antonia Fortress, which the Roman army left as a monument to their military might after they had completely demolished the Temple and the rest of the Holy City in 70 A.D. These scholars demonstrate that the place where the ancient Jewish Temples used to be in Jerusalem is now a large road. If this should prove true, it would make things even easier, because the Muslim structures would not be on top of the original Temple Mount, but on the top of the Roman Antonia Fortress!

Is this Another Sign of the Times?

Some Christian teachers of prophecy believe the construction of a Third Jewish Temple in Jerusalem to be absolutely necessary to fulfil end-time prophecy and usher in the Second Advent. They see the Temple Project and progress described above as another major prophetic “*sign of the times*” leading up to the coming of Christ.

Supporters of this teach the Antichrist will allow the animal sacrifice system of the Jews to continue in this newly-built Temple under the protection of a seven-year peace treaty with the leaders of Israel. But then he will break the peace covenant half way through the initial signing and put a stop to the daily sacrifice (see *Daniel 9:27*).

After this, the Antichrist will set up the Image of the Beast in the Holy Place, which will qualify as “*the abomination of desolation*,” described in Daniel chapter nine and twelve and by Jesus in the Gospel of Matthew and Mark.

However, some proponents of this view believe the abomination of desolation to be the Antichrist himself taking his seat in the Temple and declaring himself to be God, based on what the Apostle Paul says in Second Thessalonians chapter two.

As stated in chapter one, other Christian scholars interpret these prophecies differently. They do not deny the Jewish authorities are planning to build a Temple on the Temple Mount and reintroduce the ancient sacrificial system. They simply disagree with the assertion that the Bible clearly states the construction of a Third Temple to be absolutely necessary to fulfil end-time prophecy.

Allow me to say from the outset that, initially, I tended to favour the former opinion. However, having researched both points of view more extensively, I agree we cannot insist on the idea.

In chapter four we will examine a small portion of this evidence. But first we will provide a little background information into an important related question – “*the abomination of desolation*.”

03

WHAT IS JESUS REFERRING TO?

The term “*abomination of desolation*,” or “*desolating sacrilege*,” appears in both the Old and New Testament. In the New Testament Jesus mentions it, and says it is coming upon Jerusalem and the Temple in the future, yet He does not specify what it is exactly. Matthew records His words:

So when you see the desolating sacrilege standing in the holy place as was spoken of by the prophet Daniel, let the reader understand.

(Matthew 24:15-16)

However, we find the parenthetical note, “*let the reader understand*.” This tells us two things: that it is not only possible for the reader to know what the abomination of desolation is, but critical that he does.

Defining the Words

In Hebrew, the word *abomination* means something that is disgusting and abhorrent. Most often it is identified with idolatry, which was one of the most offensive things to God. In the Greek language, the word has the very same meaning.

The word *desolation* has also the same meaning in both Hebrew and Greek. It means something destroyed and ruined or made desolate. So, we have an abomination that causes desolation, which is how some English translations call it.

A Clear Signpost

You will notice from the quotation above that Jesus clearly refers us to the Book of Daniel for our understanding of what the abomination of desolation is. Here the term is mentioned three times. We read:

He shall make a strong covenant with many for one week, and for half of the week he shall make sacrifice and offering cease; and in their place shall be the abomination that desolates until the decreed end is poured out upon the desolator.

(Daniel 9:27)

Forces sent by him shall occupy and profane the temple and fortress. They shall abolish the regular burnt offering and set up the abomination that makes desolate. He shall seduce with intrigue those who violate the covenant; but the people who are loyal to their God shall stand firm and take action.

(Daniel 11:31-33)

From the time that the regular burnt offering is taken away and the abomination that desolates is set up, there shall be one thousand two hundred ninety days.

(Daniel 12:11)

Most scholars, who hold to a futuristic interpretation of end-time prophecy, generally agree that the only one of these three prophecies already fulfilled is that found in chapter eleven, and that it had its fulfilment in King Antiochus Epiphanes, who ruled the Seleucid Empire (Syria) from 175 to 164 B.C. Therefore, we must look to what he did for our answer.

Some Background Information

At the beginning of chapter eleven Daniel prophesies for the third time about the king of the future Greek Empire, Alexander the Great, that he had already mentioned earlier (see *Daniel 7:6, Daniel 8:5-9*).

Daniel then goes on in chapter eleven to describe the ongoing conflict between two of the major successor kingdoms into which the Greek Empire was divided after Alexander's premature death in 323 B.C. – Egypt and Syria.

Antiochus Epiphanes, a descendent of General Seleucus, one of Alexander's top four generals, is the focus of Daniel's vision from verse twenty-one to thirty-six. Then, from verse thirty-six to forty-five Daniel looks forward in time, skipping over hundreds of centuries, to the last days and reveals the nature of the final Antichrist and his activities during that period.

This is understood by the term, "*at the time of the end*," in verse forty. However, when speaking of the reign of King Antiochus in verse thirty-five Daniel says, "*There is still an interval until the time of the end.*"

Biblical and Historical Evidence

Both the Bible and secular history reveals that Antiochus attempted to invade Egypt in 168 B.C., who at that time was the leading producer of grain. The rising Roman Empire sent a delegation of senators to warn Antiochus that Rome would not allow him to conquer Egypt, most likely because such a conquest would greatly disturb the balance of power in the Mediterranean region.

The Roman senator, Gaius Popillius Laenas, gave him the Senate's demand to leave Egypt. Antiochus desired to wait before giving his reply, but the Roman senator used his staff to draw a circle around him, the now famous "*line in the sand.*"

He told Antiochus that he had to give Rome his answer before he left that circle. Knowing he had no chance against the military might of Rome, Antiochus angrily consented to withdraw his armies from Egypt. Daniel recorded it in these terms:

At the time appointed he shall return and come into the south, but this time it shall not be as it was before. For ships of Kittim shall come against him, and he shall lose heart and withdraw.

He shall be enraged and take action against the holy covenant. He shall turn back and pay heed to those who forsake the holy covenant. Forces sent by him shall occupy and profane the temple and fortress.

They shall abolish the regular burnt offering and set up the abomination that makes desolate. He shall seduce with intrigue those who violate the covenant; but the people who are loyal to their God shall stand firm and take action.

(Daniel 11:29-33)

Whether out of frustration or as an act of vengeance, Antiochus ordered his troops traveling home to Syria to attack Israel. As he and his followers entered Jerusalem, they slaughtered thousands of Jews, men, women and children. Others he took captive and sold into slavery.

After that came a terrible religious persecution for the faithful Jewish people. Antiochus not only forbade them to practice their religious customs, he also commanded them to worship the Greek god Zeus.

However, the most abominable act of Antiochus was his entering the Temple and putting a stop to the daily morning and evening sacrifice prescribed in the Law of Moses (see also *Daniel 8:9-13*), and offering an unholy, pagan sacrifice in its place.

This is all recorded in the First Book of the Maccabees (*IMaccabees 1:44-64*), a non-biblical, but historically important intertestamental book. The historian Josephus also describes it. He wrote:

And when the king had built an idol altar upon God's altar, he slew swine upon it, and so offered a sacrifice neither according to the Law, nor the Jewish religious worship in that country.

Therefore, it is easy to see how this unquestionably qualifies as the abomination that desolates.

The Remaining Question

Having established this important fact, and bearing in mind that Jesus said something similar was coming upon Jerusalem and the Temple in the future, two questions remain: was Jesus' prophecy about the abomination of desolation fulfilled in the past, or is it yet to be fulfilled?

EXAMINING MATTHEW

Christians who insist on a rebuilt Temple interpret Jesus' words of the abomination of desolation in the Gospel of Matthew to be a reference to events of the last days, in particular, to the Jewish people during the Great Tribulation. We read:

So when you see the desolating sacrilege standing in the holy place, as was spoken by the prophet Daniel (let the reader understand), then those in Judea must flee to the mountains, the one on the housetop must not go down to take what is in the house; the one in the field must not turn back to get a coat.

Woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing infants in those days! For at that time there will be great suffering, such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, and never will be. And if those days had not been cut short, no one would be saved; but for the sake of the elect those days will be cut short.

(Matthew 24:15-23)

Many interesting interpretations have been advanced concerning this passage of Scripture. Below we will provide a brief summary of just two of the most popular and then describe which we favour and why.

Partial Fulfilment

Some commentators hold that Jesus, from verse 15 to 23, is referring to the destruction of the Second Temple by the Romans in 70 A.D., and the absolute horror and destruction that befell the Jews in that generation, and that it does not have any future fulfilment. This is referred to as *partial fulfilment*.

They point out that in this account from Matthew, after Jesus had spoken to His Disciples about the coming desolation of Jerusalem and the Holy Temple, they asked Him two questions; *when* this would happen and what would be the sign of His Second Coming and the end of the age.

But in the parallel passages from the Gospel of Mark and Luke we are given additional information not found in Matthew. We are told the Disciples also asked the Lord what would be the sign that the Temple was going to be destroyed.

So we really have three questions. In reply, Jesus does not say when, but clearly informs them of what to look out for, both for the destruction of the Temple and for the end of the age.

But the signs related to these questions are all intertwined in the passage and not in chronological order. Concerning the sign that the Temple was going to be destroyed, Jesus said:

So when you see the desolating sacrilege standing in the holy place as was spoken of by the prophet Daniel, let the reader understand.

(Matthew 24:15-16)

Did something similar to that of Antiochus Epiphanes happen when the Romans came against Jerusalem. Yes! The historian Josephus tells us they brought their idols not only into the Temple courts, but placed them over the Eastern Gate, and sacrificed to them there.

This interpretation may also explain why Jesus did not specify to His Disciples what He meant by the abomination of desolation standing in the Holy Place. They would have been well aware of what He was referring to.

After the time of Antiochus, the Jewish people established a feast named *Hanukkah*, meaning *dedication*, to commemorate the deliverance and cleansing of the Temple from the abomination of desolation caused by this evil ruler. We read from the Gospel of John that Jesus celebrated this Feast also.

Literal and Symbolic Meaning

Other scholars teach this portion of Scripture was fulfilled in A.D. 70, but believe it will be fulfilled again at the end of the age in a symbolic sense. They point out that very often biblical prophecy can have both a primary literal fulfilment and a secondary symbolic fulfilment.

Therefore, the “*desolating sacrilege standing in the holy place*” becomes a prophetic picture of what will happen at the end of the age on a universal scale in Christ’s spiritual Temple, the Church, the only “Third Temple” mentioned anywhere in the entire Bible! This also means the warning to “*flee to the mountains,*” and so forth, should be interpreted metaphorically instead of literally, as it is in the Gospel of Luke (see *Luke 17:31-34*).

Drawing Conclusions

What can we say about these interesting interpretations? Concerning our first example, we can conclude it is true, but only in part. The idea that the time of unprecedented, woe and suffering had its complete fulfilment with the Fall of Jerusalem and the dispersion of the Jews in A.D. 70 is certainly not without abundant historical and biblical evidence. Jesus Himself actually said:

So that upon you may come all the righteous blood shed on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah son of Barachiah, whom you murdered between the sanctuary and the altar. Truly I tell you all this will come upon this generation.

(Matthew 23:35-37)

And the historian Josephus, an eyewitness to it all, tells us the horrors inside the Holy City went beyond the imagination of humans to comprehend and reached a limit impossible to be exceeded on Earth.

However, it would contradict other plain teaching of Scripture to say this time of great tribulation has no future fulfilment. Therefore, it is safe and logical to say that it will have a double fulfilment. A great number of commentators have proven that *Double Fulfilment*, or *Prophetic Perspective*, as it is also called, is frequent in many prophetic portions of Scripture.

Finally, concerning the theory that Matthew's abomination of desolation prophecy has both a primary literal fulfilment and a secondary symbolic fulfilment, we can say that it is very probable, and makes perfect sense when compared with other end-time prophetic portions of Scripture. This will be the subject of our next chapter.

WHAT WAS IN PAUL'S MIND?

There are two other New Testament passages of Scripture used to support the necessity of a rebuilt Temple in Jerusalem. Speaking of events to unfold in the last days, the Apostle Paul writes:

Let no one deceive you in any way; for that day will not come unless the rebellion comes first and the lawless one is revealed, the one destined for destruction. He opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, declaring himself to be God.

(2Thessalonians 2:3-5)

Again, it is argued, for this prophecy to be fulfilled, the Third Temple would have to be rebuilt. But there is abundant evidence that powerfully supports the idea that the Temple spoken of by Paul is the Church, not the Temple in Jerusalem.

Back to the Originals

First, scholars have pointed out that when referring to the Temple in this passage from Second Thessalonians, Paul uses the Greek word *naos*, which in all of his other writings, and many other New Testament Books, refers to the Body of Christ, the Church and not the physical Temple in Jerusalem. When the physical Temple is spoken of in the New Testament, the Greek word *hieron* is used.

It is the same with the other New Testament passage used to insist the necessity of a rebuilt Jewish Temple, found in the Book of Revelation. The Apostle John writes:

I was given a reed like a measuring rod and was told, "Go and measure the temple of God and the altar, and count the worshippers there. But exclude the outer court; do not measure it, because it has been given to the Gentiles. They will trample on the holy city for 42 months."

(Revelation 11:1-3)

Again, in this portion of Scripture the Greek word *naos* is used for the word *temple*. But in John's writings elsewhere, the Greek word *hieron* is used when speaking of the physical Temple in Jerusalem that existed in Jesus' day.

It's not about Unbelieving Jews or Gentiles!

Second, in Second Thessalonians quoted above Paul assures the saints that the Lord has not yet returned, nor has the Day of the Lord already occurred, because two things must happen before that Day – the great rebellion and the appearance of the man of sin.

Paul also clearly informs us in this portion of Scripture that it is this rebellion that allows the Antichrist to be revealed and take his seat in the Temple of God. The two events are very much connected, you cannot have one without the other!

Now, the word Paul uses here for *rebellion* is *apostasia* in Greek. It is used throughout the Septuagint and elsewhere in the New Testament to speak of a falling away from the faith on the part of God's Covenant people.

This connects Paul's teaching to our Lord's warning in the Gospels about false teachers and people who claim to be believers, but who fall away and take a number of people with them. Therefore, this whole passage refers to professing Christians, not Jews or unbelieving Gentiles, who are not of the faith to begin with, and are already given over to believe the devil's lie.

Consequently, the Antichrist taking his seat in the Temple of God, must have a figurative meaning; describing an act that implies the exercise of great authority within the visible Church!

06

WHAT ABOUT DANIEL'S PROPHECIES?

As we stated elsewhere, there are two Old Testament passages quoted as evidence for the necessity of a rebuilt Jewish Temple. Speaking of events to happen in the last days, the Prophet Daniel says:

He shall make a strong covenant with many for one week, and for half of the week he shall make sacrifice and offering cease; and in their place shall be the abomination that desolates until the decreed end is poured out upon the desolator.

(Daniel 9:27)

And further on Daniel writes:

From the time that the regular burnt offering is taken away and the abomination that desolates is set up, there shall be one thousand two hundred ninety days.

(Daniel 12:11)

Again, it is argued that animal sacrifices have not occurred in Jerusalem since A.D. 70, when the legions of Titus burned the Second Temple to the ground. So the Antichrist could not stop the daily sacrifice unless, prior to that time, the animal sacrifice system has been reinstated and the Temple rebuilt.

What explanation can we give to these questions? First, let it be said that some of our most eminent scholars have debated about these portions of Scripture for centuries. Time forbids that I enumerate all their conclusions, but just a few of the most popular explanations will suffice.

Some pointed out that the word *temple* is not actually in the original Hebrew text of Daniel. It only says he will set up the abomination on a *wing*. The word temple appears in some English translations probably to try and make sense of the sentence. But it is usually put in brackets, indicating that it is not part of the original text.

And with regard to Daniel chapter twelve, it has been pointed out that there is no mention of a temple or sanctuary. It only says that sacrifices, not specified what kind of sacrifices, or exactly where they are being offered, are done away with.

In light of this, some commentators have suggested that some type of sacrificial system might be reintroduced on a daily basis in the near future allowing Daniel's prophecies to be fulfilled, but not necessarily in a rebuilt Temple in Jerusalem.

Already, for some time now, Jews around the world have been offering blood sacrifices for the Day of Atonement; a rooster for every male and a hen for each female.

These sacrifices of roosters and hens are called *kapporoth*, which means propitiatory or atoning sacrifices. They are used as substitutes for the atoning sacrifices prescribed by Moses in the Old Testament.

Others have suggested that these texts require a figurative interpretation, like Matthew's abomination of desolation standing in the holy place, which we explained in chapter four.

Still other commentators suggest the meaning of these Scriptures are hidden, to be understood only by the last generation, when "*everything that is concealed will be brought to light and made known to all.*"

What's Most Convincing

Dear reader, in light of the biblical and historic evidence we have given so far, you will agree one cannot insist on the idea that Scripture demands a rebuilt Temple to fulfil end-time prophecies. But let us just suppose for a moment that all the arguments we have shown could somehow be proven false. Would it make a difference?

I agree with those who believe it would not, because there remains one piece of evidence that is absolutely indisputable. When Jesus died on the Cross for our sins, God Himself tore the Curtain in the Temple, indicating to the world that the Jewish Temple, together with the sacrifices offered for sin, were to be abolished forever.

Any fair-minded person will admit that to counter this would be the worst insult ever performed by man towards His Creator! So we must ask ourselves this question: If Scripture truly demands a Third Temple in Jerusalem to fulfil end-time prophecy, would God set His seal of approval on such a rebellious initiative by inspiring the Apostle Paul and John to refer to it as "*the Temple of God?*"