

# Your QUESTIONS About Prophecy ANSWERED Part 10

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## SHOULD CHRISTIANS SUPPORT THE REBUILDING OF THE TEMPLE?

Over the past several issues of *Jacob's Ladder* we have been discussing the Temple and its rebuilding. We have discussed whether the Jewish people want to rebuild the Temple or not and where the Temple may have been located on the Temple Mount. In the last two issues, we discussed what prophetic event might pave the way for the Temple to be rebuilt. (All past articles may be found at [www.LightToIsrael.com/Resource/Center1a.htm](http://www.LightToIsrael.com/Resource/Center1a.htm).)

The importance of the Temple in the last days hinges on two verses:

*Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week (seven); but in the middle of the week he shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate, even until the consummation, which is determined, is poured out on the desolate. (Daniel 9:27)*

*Therefore when you see the 'abomination of desolation,' spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (whoever reads, let him understand), then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. (Matthew 24:15-16)*

Daniel is telling us that in the last "seven" (years) of God's plan for Israel,

a prince will come and make a seven year treaty with many in Israel. The treaty (covenant) apparently includes allowing the Jewish people to have a Temple with sacrifices. The treaty is broken after three and one half years when the prince orders the sacrifices stopped and causes the "Abomination of Desolation" (LXX) to occur.

In the Matthew passage, Jesus says when one sees the Abomination of Desolation he or she should get out of town! The reader is also commanded in the passage to understand the Abomination of Desolation. Daniel 11 gives us the understanding of the Abomination of Desolation. In one of the most specific prophecies found in the Bible, Daniel gives us the history of the Seleucid and Ptolemy kingdoms. This passage tells us that out of the Seleucid kingdom will come a ruler described as "a vile person, to whom they shall not give the honour of the kingdom: but he shall come in peaceably, and obtain the kingdom by flatteries" (Daniel 11:21) who will muster his forces "and they shall defile the sanctuary fortress; then they shall take away the daily sacrifices, and place there the abomination of desolation." (Daniel 11:31) From history we know that despicable character was Antiochus Epiphanes. And how did he make the Temple abominable? He sacrificed a pig upon the altar and placed a statue of a

pagan god in the Temple.

Therefore, the Abomination of Desolation is the defiling of the Temple with a pagan worship and the stopping of the levitical sacrifices. We can see that in order for these prophecies to be fulfilled there needs to be a Temple with a functioning sacrificial system. Is there an interest in rebuilding the Temple by the Jewish people today?

We have previously mentioned that there are several groups preparing for the rebuilding of the Temple including making the furniture and studying how the worship is to be conducted. One of those is the Temple Institute. Their center is just a short walk from the Western Wall. If you join us on one of our "Light to Israel" tours, we will take you to the center. You will learn a great deal about what rabbinic Judaism believes Temple worship was like before 70 AD. This group greatly depends on the interest and support of the Christian community to continue moving towards rebuilding the Temple. Just recently they asked Christians around the world to sign a petition asking the Israeli government to stop the recent digging on the Temple Mount (see "Archeology in the News" in this issue). In fact, another Christian organization emailed me asking me to go on the Temple Institute's website and sign the petition.

## Should Christians Support the Rebuilding of the Temple? Continued

It is exciting to see events coming together which can lead to the rebuilding of the Temple. But, there is a question we must ask, "How much should Christians be involved all of this?"

The answer to that question is more complex than what appears at first glance.

First, there is the theological challenge. Many accuse us of wanting to bring back the sacrifice system. Here an excerpt from a message given by Texas pastor four years ago:

*"Should we Christians have any concern that a new temple will be built in Jerusalem? ABSOLUTELY NOT! And in fact if such a building were ever built it would be an abomination.*

*Do you really think there ought to be a place where animals are sacrificed again? Do you really think there should be a place where the old ceremonial laws of the Old Testament are once again reenacted? That is what some people mean when they say, 'Rebuild the Temple in Jerusalem.' If they say that, I should not be standing before a pulp it preaching to you the word of God...I should be standing before an altar with an animal and a knife, and you should hear the scream of the animal, and you should smell the blood."*<sup>1</sup>

Yes, this pastor is overly dramatic and if you would read his entire sermon you would see he believes the Church has

replaced Israel thus God has no future plans for the Jewish people other than they need to be saved. He even tries to

further establish his point by stating he is half Jewish, yet he raises an interesting question. Do we, who believe the Temple will be rebuilt, support the reestablishment of the priesthood and sacrificial system? Or as is often asked, "Why would God allow the sacrificial system to start again since Jesus is our ultimate sacrifice?"

Like other wrong-headed arguments the pastor is building a "straw man" and then knocking him down. Believing the Temple will be rebuilt in the last days does not mean one endorses the resulting animal sacrifices. Also, the reestablishing of the sacrificial systems does not mean God has put His stamp of approval on it. The foretelling of an event is not an endorsement neither does it mean that God will sanction it.

The fact that we believe that the Temple will be rebuilt and sacrifices started does not mean that we believe God will change His plan of redemption nor does it mean God will accept the sacrifices. For example, the sacrificial system continued for forty years after Jesus' death and resurrection. Jesus had fulfilled the requirements of the Law so that sacrifices were not needed. Yet, the sacrifices continued for forty more years. At that time the existence of a Temple and the sacrificial system did not nullify what Jesus did on the cross, so why would it be any different if the Temple is

rebuilt in the future?

That brings us back to our original question. Should Christians encourage and support the rebuilding of the Temple or sign a petition to stop the destruction of the Temple Mount?

There is nothing wrong with wanting to preserve the Temple Mount and not wanting the remains of its rich history to be destroyed. The issue arises over signing a petition sponsored by the Temple Institute. The Institute believes it has been called of the Lord to prepare the way for the rebuilding of the Temple and thus prepare for the (only) coming of the Messiah. The danger is in giving the impression that we agree that the Jewish Messiah has not yet come and that God will bless this temple's sacrificial system. If we give that impression, we are saying that Jesus is for the Gentiles and there is another messiah or way of salvation for the Jews. This, of course, is not what we believe.

There is great interest in the historical Temple site and the possible rebuilding of the Temple by many people. We should be interested as well. But let us always remember first and foremost that we are to be witnesses of the truth that the Messiah has already come once and we believe He is imminently coming again.

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