

Your QUESTIONS About Prophecy ANSWERED Part 4

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WHAT ABOUT THE TEMPLE?

Is there a desire to rebuild the Temple by the Jews?

Probably the best illustration of the Jewish thinking concerning the rebuilding of the Temple occurred in the summer of 1967. In June of that year, Israel was confronted by her Arab neighbors in what is called today the Six Day War. To the surprise of everyone, within three days the Israeli Defense Forces had liberated the Old City of Jerusalem including the Temple Mount which had been under the control of the Jordanians since 1948, and an Israeli flag was placed on the top of the Dome of the Rock. The joy among many in the religious Jewish community was best expressed by Rabbi Shlomo Goren, then chaplain of the Israeli army, who declared, "We have taken the city of God. We are entering the Messianic era for the Jewish people, and I promise to the Christian world that what we are responsible for we will take care of." The Temple Mount was once again in control of the Jewish people.

In the midst of this great joy a more moderate political view of the Temple Mount was established. First, Defense Minister Moshe Dayan ordered the Israeli flag be removed from the Dome of the Rock. Then two weeks later Dayan entered the Al-Aksa Mosque on the Temple Mount to meet with five leaders of the Supreme Muslim Council. The ensuing discussions established Israel's policy regarding the Temple Mount which is still in place today. The Supreme Muslim Council would have sole administrative control over the Temple Mount. Though Jews would be

allowed to go on the Temple Mount, they would not be allowed to pray on there. Moshe Dayan's own words best explain why he would allow Judaism's most holy site to remain in Muslim control, "I have no doubt that because the power is in our hands we must take a stand based on yielding. We must view the Temple Mount as a historic site relating to past memory."

These concessions didn't sit well with those who advocated the rebuilding of the Temple including the aforementioned Rabbi Goren. In August of that year, Rabbi Goren attempted to establish a Jewish identity on the Temple Mount by demonstratively praying in the Temple Mount courtyard contrary to Dayan's arrangement with the Muslim leaders. As one can imagine, Rabbi Goren's action created a reaction. The Muslim leadership responded by locking the gate which leads to the Mount from the Western Wall thus preventing Jews from entering the Temple Mount. Eventually, the Israelis gained control of that gate which is still monitored by her military.

A secondary reaction came from the Chief Rabbis of the Sephardic and Ashkenazi Jewish communities. They wrote a joint statement forbidding Jews to visit the Temple Mount based on the position that the Jewish people were ceremonially unclean and might accidentally walk on the area where the Holy of Holies once stood. This historical account illustrates the stalemate that continues to exist to this



Dome of the Rock

Continuing our discussion of the most often asked questions on prophecy, we will now look at the location of the Temple on the Temple Mount. This topic is usually broached with the following question: "How do you think the Dome of the Rock will be destroyed so the Temple can be rebuilt?"

This question assumes several things. The first assumption is the Jews want to rebuild the Temple. The second assumption is that the only reason the Temple has not been rebuilt is because another religion's shrine is on its location. The final assumption is the Dome of the Rock is on the location of the previous two temples.



Dome of the Rock from south

very day. Israel liberated the Old City of Jerusalem and the Temple Mount from Jordanian control, yet they allowed Muslims to continue to have administrative control. Ironically, Jews were forbidden from worshiping on the Mount. Then the Chief Rabbinate of Israel went a step further and banned all religious Jews from even going on this Temple platform as stated on a sign posted at the site's gate: "NOTICE WARNING - Entrance to the area of the Temple Mount is forbidden to everyone by Jewish Law owing to the sacredness of the place."

The secular Jews are not interested in building a Temple for religious reasons. They see the Temple Mount as part of their great history and desire control of it to rebuild a temple for nationalistic reasons.

The religious Jews are divided in two basic positions on the Temple. There is the "wait for Messiah" position which believes the Messiah will rebuild the Temple and bring the redemption of the Jewish people. The other position is the Jewish people need to do

everything they can to get ready to build the Third Temple. In this group some believe they need to get the items ready as David did for Solomon so the coming Son of David (Messiah) can quickly build the Temple. Even in this group some hold they may have to build the Temple before Messiah comes to cleanse the people in readiness for His arrival. The best known of this group is *The Temple Institute* which many Christian tour groups visit while touring the Old City. The Institute is researching the sacred vessels used in temple worship and reconstructing them for use in the Third Temple.

Last year, for many, another significant step was taken toward the rebuilding of the Temple by the re-establishing of the Sanhedrin. While the acceptance of the Sanhedrin is by no means universal among the rabbinic community, the *World News Daily* (June 9, 2005) reported the following:

Nevertheless, the group will establish a forum of architects and engineers to begin plans

for rebuilding the Temple - a move fraught with religious and political volatility.

The group... is calling on the Jewish people to contribute toward the acquisition of materials for the purpose of rebuilding the Temple - including the gathering and preparation of prefabricated, disassembled portions to be stored and ready for rapid assembly, "in the manner of King David."

Yes, many among the devout Jewish community want to see the Third Temple built. Evangelical Christians also believe the Temple will be rebuilt and then desecrated (see the last issue



Al Aqsa Mosque from north

of Jacob's Ladder). Therefore, the present-day status quo will change and maybe very soon. And that change could have devastating results when we realize that one billion Muslims are committed to keeping the Temple Mount out of Jewish hands.

Next time we will look at why the Muslims believe the Temple Mount belongs to them.

-Larry Jaffrey

