

Your QUESTIONS About Prophecy ANSWERED Part 7

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WHAT WILL IT TAKE FOR THE TEMPLE TO BE REBUILT?

We began this series on the Temple with the question I am often asked, "How do you think the Dome of the Rock will be destroyed so the Temple can be rebuilt?" First, we had to answer the question, "Do the Jewish people want to rebuild the Temple?" Then we looked at the Islamic claim to the Temple Mount which is presently hindering any effort to build a temple. Next we looked at the three major theories on the location of the Second Temple on the platform. In the last issue of *Jacob's Ladder* we pointed out that a synagogue is not a temple. You can reread these articles by going to our website www.MiddleEastMinistries.org and checking out our "Resource Center" page.

Now let's go back to the original question, "How do you think the Dome of the Rock will be destroyed so the Temple can be rebuilt?" We have seen that the Dome of the Rock may or may not be the location of the first two temples. A better question to ask is, "What would it take for the Muslims to allow the Jews to rebuild the Temple on their holy site?"

In today's tense religious/political climate, almost anything can create unrest. For example, on September 28, 2000, Ariel Sharon visited the Temple Mount in Jerusalem. He did this during regular visiting hours with the permission on the Mufi in charge of the Temple Mount. Yet this visit became the pretext for instigating large-scale demonstrations

and the start of the al-Aqsa intifada.

This past winter when the Israelis began repairing a ramp to the Temple Mount, the headlines around the world implied Israel was actually on the Mount itself doing the repairs. See the accompanying article, "A Serious Overreaction to Moving Some Dirt."

If the Temple Mount area is such an emotionally sensitive site, what would it take for Muslims to allow the Jews to once again worship on their holy site? Is there any prophecy or prophetic event that would lay the groundwork for the Jewish people to once again have control of the Temple Mount? It would have to be an event that would so impact the Islamic world that they would no longer have the willpower or ability to prevent the rebuilding of the Temple.

Of all of the prophecies on the Last Days, the Prophet Ezekiel tells us of several events that will change the geo/political scene in the Mediterranean area.

First, Jehovah has Ezekiel declare that the Jewish people, having been scattered among the nations of the world, will return to their own land. "For I will take you from among the nations, gather you out of all countries, and bring you into your own land." (Ezekiel 36:24 NKJV)

Earlier in the passage Jehovah shares with Ezekiel why they are scattered among the nations. "Son of man, when the house

of Israel dwelt in their own land, they defiled it by their own ways and deeds; to Me their way was like the uncleanness of a woman in her customary impurity. Therefore I poured out My fury on them for the blood they had shed on the land, and for their idols with which they had defiled it. So I scattered them among the nations, and they were dispersed throughout the countries; I judged them according to their ways and their deeds." (Ezekiel 36:17-19 NKJV)

Because of their sin God scattered them among the nations. But as they are scattered among the nations, God's reputation or "name" is called into question by the nations where the Jewish people were scattered. "When they came to the nations, wherever they went, they profaned My holy name—when they [nations] said of them, 'These are the people of the LORD, and yet they have gone out of His land.'" (Ezekiel 36:20 NKJV)

The prophecy then goes on to say that a time will come when God will take action to restore His good name. "But I had concern for My holy name, which the house of Israel had profaned among the nations wherever they went. Therefore say to the house of Israel, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "I do not do this for your sake, O house of Israel, but for My holy name's sake, which you have

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profaned among the nations wherever you went.” (Ezekiel 36:21-22 NKJV)

From our perspective the event that triggered God to action to redeem His “holy name” was the Holocaust. As the world realized what one of the most advanced nations of the world did to the Jews, the question arose “What type of God would allow such a massacre to happen?” God’s reputation was being called into question. It was time for Him to take action to reclaim His “name.”

What did He do? He had the nations of the world vote to give the Jewish people back their homeland. While a homeland was given to the Jewish people, that vote also laid the groundwork for much of the turmoil in the Middle East today. But, has God’s reputation improved?

At first glance some may wonder. Israel seems to be the lightning rod attracting hatred and terror. Yet, with the reestablishment of the state of Israel there arose a sense among the Christians in the world that God is still in charge.

I can remember as a child talking with my neighborhood buddy. We both went to Sunday School. One day while we were playing outside, we began discussing whether there was a God or not. My friend asked me why I believed there was a God, and my response was one word, “Israel.” I was not saved until several years

later, but even as a young boy I knew “Israel” was proof there was a God. Over the years I have had many conversations with people who have stated that the nation of Israel is proof to them that God is still working and loves the Jews.

In the next chapter, Ezekiel is given another image picturing the Jewish people becoming a nation once again. God shows Ezekiel a valley filled with sun-bleached bones. God asks him, “Can these bones live?” and Ezekiel’s response is, “O Lord God, You know.” Then God asks him to prophesy to the bones to come alive.

So I prophesied as I was commanded; and as I prophesied, there was a noise, and suddenly a rattling; and the bones came together, bone to bone. Indeed, as I looked, the sinews and the flesh came upon them, and the skin covered them over; but there was no breath in them. Also He said to me, “Prophecy to the breath, prophesy, son of man, and say to the breath, ‘Thus says the Lord GOD: “Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe on these slain, that they may live.”’” So I prophesied as He commanded me, and breath came into them, and they lived, and stood upon their feet, an exceedingly great army. (Ezekiel 37:7-10 NKJV)

What a picture! A people scattered like dry bones on a desert valley floor come to life and become a great army. As the resurrection of Jesus and

our subsequent resurrections are foundational to our faith, so also is the resurrection of the nation of Israel foundational to God’s plan for the Last Days.

Now God tells Ezekiel that this resurrected nation is going to be one nation not two nations (Judah and Ephraim). “Surely I will take the children of Israel from among the nations, wherever they have gone, and will gather them from every side and bring them into their own land; and I will make them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king over them all; they shall no longer be two nations, nor shall they ever be divided into two kingdoms again.” (Ezekiel 37:21-22 NKJV)

Today, Israel is one nation.

The passage goes on to describe that God will have His Servant David as king over them after they are in their land. This most likely is referring to the day when “all Israel will be saved.” (Romans 11:26) This has not happened yet, but it will some day soon.

In this issue we have seen that God will bring the Jewish people back to the mountains of Israel. In the next issue we will look at what happens next to these regathered people which would allow for the Temple to be rebuilt.

-Larry Jaffrey