

# Jerusalem, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Temple and Prophecy

## My Jerusalem Diary

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by Philip Shields

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**Summary:** Are preparations underway behind the scenes for a 3<sup>rd</sup> Temple to be built in Jerusalem? You'll be amazed as I share insights and first hand reports from our recent trip to Israel. I discuss why it won't be easy even just to resume sacrifices without a temple. What we cover in this fast paced sermon will amaze you.  
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Greetings, brethren. Today, as I record this, it is day 28 of the counting of the omer up to the 50<sup>th</sup> day of Pentecost. I'll talk about Pentecost in the next sermon, but in this message today I want to do two things: tell you about our trip to Israel and Jerusalem (up to page 7), and then spend the rest of the sermon time on what we saw and experienced first-hand about preparations for a possible 3<sup>rd</sup> Temple on the Temple Mount (starting bottom of page 7).

*[Those of you who only print off transcripts, I recommend you continue to do that – but please also try listening to the audio while you follow along in the transcript. There are things I say in the audio that don't make it to the transcript – and vice versa. The “transcript” is an approximate transcript since I am the only one producing these, and a word-by-word transcript simply takes too much time.]*

In the meantime, we are exactly 4 weeks into the Omer count for Pentecost as I record this, but that won't be true for you when you hear this, or perhaps Pentecost will even be done already. By the way, we should be counting up to Day 50 and be aware of what day we're on. I'll talk more next time about the coming Feast of Pentecost and counting *up to* the 50<sup>th</sup> day (not down from). Be sure to hear it as I'm confident there will be some new material for many of you.

Today, I thought I'd share points and lessons from our recent 2-1/2 week trip all over Israel. I'll tie it in to thoughts about a possible 3<sup>rd</sup> Temple in our lifetimes and preparations already going on, as well as make comments that may help you understand that volatile land over there. Someday, we too – and you as well – may be calling that real estate our home.

*“Pray for the peace of Jerusalem,”* our great Creator tells us, and do they ever need our prayers. That's a prayer I hope we actively obey. Jerusalem will be the center of world headlines, of searches for peace followed by incredible carnage and bloodbaths, followed by the coming of the Messiah to set up His worldwide kingdom. Yes, we should be aware of what's going on in Israel.

If you ever get to make a trip to Israel like we did, I hope you do. Reading scripture will never be the same to you after that. But, if you go, give yourself time to really soak it in. That's what we did. It's not cheap to go there and travel around – but I felt it was worth every dime. In fact, I'd love to lead a group on a tour all over Israel, God willing, with the help of an expert guide I found as well. I will say it was the best trip we have ever made, and we've traveled in 24 countries.

**Jerusalem** – some call it “the center of the world.” Though Rome is called “the eternal city” - I think that moniker is more appropriate for Jerusalem. The “salem” part of Jerusalem is believed to

come from *shalom*, which means “peace.” So, the city’s very name implies and means “City of Peace,” and yet more blood has probably been shed in this small area than any other land on the face of the earth. Jerusalem has been *completely* destroyed at least twice: by the Babylonians and Romans, besieged for months and even years at a time; twenty-three times that we know about. It’s been viciously attacked at least 52 times, and captured and recaptured 44 times. The tally hasn’t stopped there, I assure you. And, for most of the past 2000 years, Jews had no real homeland until after World War II, with the UN Mandate in 1947 and full nationhood in 1948.

Please turn now to Psalm 122. Wherever your English Bible says “LORD,” I will use the true inspired name – Yahweh – the name He says He wants us to learn, to know, to use, to proclaim and to honor and respect. It’s His personal name.

Let’s read Psalm 122. I wanted you to see where Scripture says we are to pray for its peace.

“I was glad when they said to me, “Let us go into the house of Yahweh.”

<sup>2</sup> Our feet have been standing within your gates, O Jerusalem!

<sup>3</sup> Jerusalem is built as a city that is compact together,

<sup>4</sup> Where the tribes *go up*, the tribes of Yahweh, To the Testimony of Israel, to give thanks to the name of Yahweh. <sup>5</sup> For thrones are set there for judgment, the thrones of the house of David.

<sup>6</sup> **Pray for the peace of Jerusalem:** (CJB says “Pray for shalom in Yerushalayim”) “May they prosper who love you. <sup>7</sup> Peace be within your walls, (“shalom within your ramparts”- CJB) Prosperity within your palaces.” <sup>8</sup> For the sake of my brethren and companions, I will now say, “Peace be within you.”

[And, now notice verse 9, which we’ll focus on somewhat today]

<sup>9</sup> *Because of the house of Yahweh our God, I will seek your good.*”

I’m going to talk about Jerusalem, and also about our trip there – but the focus of a great deal of this **sermon will be on the desire in Israel to restore temple worship, to build a 3<sup>rd</sup> Temple**. I mean a literal building – and I mean full blown temple worship, sacrifices, rituals and priesthood. Many doubt we’ll see this in our lifetime, but I’m leaning more and more heavily towards expecting a 3<sup>rd</sup> Temple somehow, in spite of all its obstacles.

Three world religions lay claim to significant parts of Jerusalem. Even as I speak, Pope Benedict XVI is in Jordan, wearing a Jordanian “*kaffiyeh*”—their red/white scarf –and today, on God’s Sabbath, he will be speaking in Amman’s 2<sup>nd</sup> largest mosque! He is beginning his trip in Jordan, and then will go to Jerusalem and the West Bank. Be watching the ramifications of his trip carefully. You might wish to check out [www.jpost.com](http://www.jpost.com) – a website for news from Jerusalem Post.

Jerusalem was the capital of united Israel under King David and King Solomon. Muslims claim Al Aqsa Mosque could be the “distant mosque” that Mohammed supposedly visited in his famous Night Journey – so they make a claim to it as well, though *Jerusalem is never actually ever even mentioned in the Koran*. Still, they now call it their 3<sup>rd</sup> holiest city. And, of course Christians call it home as well, as this was where our Lord was crucified and resurrected. Oddly enough though, Christians for hundreds of years minimized the Jewish holy sites and even treated the Temple mount itself as a garbage dump site, I kid you not. They considered the temple’s destruction as proof the eternal God had abandoned the Jews in favor of their flavor of Christianity.

All three world religions jealously guard what churches, mosques, and land they control. Jerusalem – or Yerushalayim - has celebrated more than 40 years now since the 1967 war when Israel took control of the entire city for the first time in hundreds of years. Many Palestinian Muslims make Jerusalem their home today, and their name for it is *Al Quds*. Though it is the capital of Israel, no western nation to my knowledge acknowledges that fact. Jerusalem is the size of Portland, OR in population – about ¾ of a million in a land of 7 million.

Jerusalem's history goes back many thousands of years, making it one of the oldest cities in the world. It was called *Jebus* (YEH-buse) and one of the last cities to be conquered by the Israelites in their Promised Land (Joshua 15:63). At that time, it was actually part of the inheritance of Benjamin, not Judah (Joshua 18:28). Later, Judah did conquer it and burned it (Judges 1:8, 21) but the local people were not driven out. It reverted to Jebusite control some time during the Judges, and was considered a “city of the Jebusites” (Judges 19:10-12), foreigners to the Israelites.

Jerusalem – or Jebus-- was eventually conquered by Joab, David's nephew (2 Samuel 5:6-9). He became the eventual head of the military. Joab found a tunnel that went under and through and into the city, possibly the same one Carole and I walked through – called The Canaanite Tunnel on the southern area of the old City of David area. If you read 2 Samuel 5:6-9, we see that David referred now to Jebus, Jerusalem –as “The City of David”—and that part of greater Jerusalem always was called City of David after that.

The City of David (called *Ir David*) is the small hillside area just south of the Temple Mount today – probably no bigger than what most of you would consider a modern day hilly city block or two at most. The entire city of David would fit into the development where we live in Washington. It's that small. However, it was surrounded by deep ravines, especially back then they were very steep. Much of the steepness of the ancient ravines have been filled in, but it is still clearly steep, and one can imagine how difficult it would be to conquer it if you can picture steep walls on top of steep cliffs. To this day there is now a road that goes right around what was the small City of David, to the south of the temple, and just up from the Kidron and opposite the Mount of Olives.

You might want to check out this website if you want a picture of our best idea of what Jerusalem looked like in David's day. You'll love the virtual tour of the City of David in his day – it takes only 2 minutes. Watch it to the end where it ends up at David's palace. Check this out:

[http://www.cityofdavid.org.il/hp\\_eng.asp](http://www.cityofdavid.org.il/hp_eng.asp)

It's a pretty neat site. Just open it and watch the short movie and then play with various links on the site and you'll learn a lot of what I'm speaking about here.

Of course, Jerusalem continued to grow and eventually Mount Moriah to the north became the temple site – and off to the east is a low lying range called the Mt. of Olives. They used the foot of the Mt of Olives to grow their olive groves and gardens outside the city. The Mt. of Olives is now full of hundreds of thousands of gravesites.

I can't describe the feelings, thoughts and emotion I felt standing on the Mount of Olives while reading Zechariah 14:1-6, especially verse 4, about how Messiah's feet will land on that mount, and it shall cleave in two – to the north and to the south. I often went to the Mount of Olives, trudging up from the Kidron Valley, through the Garden of Gethsemane, to the top, overlooking thousands of

graves. At dusk it is surreal. You feel an inner peace surrounded by the noise of dozens of taxis (they love to honk their horns over there over nothing), the bells of the Christian churches pealing, the tape recorded cries of the *muzzein* blaring on loud speakers calling the Muslim faithful to pray, while facing Mecca to the southeast.

There are over 800 references to Jerusalem in scripture. We're told to remember to pray for the peace of Jerusalem.

Anyone who believes in Yahweh and has half a brain cell working even part time can't read that without concluding we need to be on the right side of Israel and Jerusalem – praying for its peace and supporting its nationhood as Psalm 122:6 says: "May they prosper who love you." Many scriptures tell us God will bless those who bless Israel and curse those who curse Israel.

Psalm 137:5-6 says, "If I forget you, Yerushalayim, may my right hand wither away! May my tongue stick to the roof of my mouth if I fail to remember you, or if I fail to count Yerushalayim as the greatest of my joys."

*Israel is not much bigger than New Jersey.* What strikes you is how close everything is. From Jerusalem to Sea of Galilee is only an hour and a half drive. Bethlehem is 5 miles - - just 8-10 minute drive -- from the old city of Jerusalem. From ancient Dan in the north to Beersheba in the south fits in New Jersey. If a fighter bomber took off from Jordan, it could be over many parts of Israel within 2-3 minutes. Did you hear me? Two or three minutes! The checkpoints, the security measures are necessary.

We easily traveled all over the land, though we stayed out of the hot spots of Hebron, Ramallah, Nablus, Jenin and – believe it or not – even Bethlehem and Jericho are not recommended stops unless you're with a proper Arab guide and know exactly what you're doing. But, otherwise, we felt very safe. Jews are not allowed by their rabbis – or by the Muslims – to enter the Temple Mount.

It was very, very sobering thinking about all the wars and hundreds of thousands who have been killed in this city as we trudged through the Kidron Ravine, as I prefer to refer to it, separating the Mount of Olives and the temple mount. I could only imagine the scores of thousands of the feet of others who had walked the same ground we were walking on: peasants, city dwellers, soldiers, attackers, Muslims, Crusaders, Egyptians, Jews, Israelis, Romans, Idumeans, and people from probably every nation. What a country, what a people. But, remember for most of the past 2000 years these Jews had no land, no country of their own – but were scattered all over the world.

Also, remember that thousands of Muslims were slaughtered also by the Crusaders and Christians fighting in the name of Christ supposedly. So, there's a lot of bad blood between the groups. How the Crusaders conducted themselves is pathetic, when you study it. Anyway, I met dozens and dozens of Palestinians, and had sometimes long conversations with them as I ate in their restaurants, or rode in their cabs, or climbed up long hills in the Arab quarter. I came away feeling about the average man on the street, vs. the radical Islamists: "these are real people too. They have children and grandchildren as I do." Many of the Arabs I spoke to also resent their own radical leaders who won't let them get on with their lives in peace. They want peace as I do. Many of them are tired of the killing and tension, as the Jews are. They, too, need a home, a place to grow fruits and vegetables. They, too, need a job to go to and schools to send their children too – not just the madrasas of hate ("schools" where youth are indoctrinated into radical Islam) that the radicals want

to pass off as a school. Many of them have spent time in America and have family members in America. On the other hand, it was also clear that quite a few had become radicalized and are strongly anti-Jewish.

There's a lot of bad blood over there between the different cultures. Right now, there are 5.5 million Jews in Israel (but if you take out the frequent visitors who get into the count – probably more like 4.5 million) vs. 1.5 million resident Arabs. *Now get this: with the Jewish birth rate being a fraction of what Arab birth rate is, Israel's voters will be equally Jewish and Arab within 18 years.* The birth rate difference alone could turn Israel into an Arab state within 25-30 years unless something is done about it—without having to resort to shedding blood. At the very least, this growing number of embedded Palestinians will result in an ever louder cry for more laws sympathetic to Palestinians, more court-friendly appointments, and so on.

Orthodox Jews feel justified being tough on Palestinians because they say Yahweh gave them the land and told Abraham to disown Ishmael, the forefather of most Arabs. They would say the Arabs lost their claim to anything of Abraham. The Arabs feel that is so wrong, and, in fact, think it was Isaac who stole the birthright from Ishmael; that it was Ishmael who was almost sacrificed, and so on. (They believe Abraham almost sacrificed Ishmael in Mecca.)

Anyway, it's a mess that only a loving one God can solve.

### Our Travel Highlights

We rented a car and drove up to the Northern border with Syria, way up in the Golan Heights. We loved Galilee – or Lake Kenneret as it is also called. Names are spelled many ways over there. I saw at least 3 different spellings for our street name, for Beersheba, Masada, Hazor, Bethlehem, and so on.

They certainly pronounce Biblical names differently than we do.

Some of the tribes of Israel for example – Levi (LEH-vee), Naftali (Naf-TAH-lee), Megiddo is Meh-GEE-doh. What we think of as common names are different in the Hebrew. Moses is Moshe, like General Moshe Dayan. Isaac is Yitzak. Aaron is Aharon. You wouldn't believe Jeremiah in Hebrew. No "J" sounds – so Joab is YO-ab; Jonah is YOH-nah (I'm writing it phonetically).

Galilee is lush and green and full of flowers, as Jews plant millions of trees. The lake is about 15 miles long and 8 miles wide. So much history there. We experienced having to stop outside a mall and having our car examined for bombs. Nazareth and Cana – now modern Arab cities. Few Jews live there. Megiddo – and imagining the many wars over the millennia in that vast valley – and the great war to come. Acre, wow. We walked on the same floors of the crusader buildings that King Richard and his men walked. Ate in the same halls that saw Marco Polo feasting.

Then, of course, we spent lots of time in Jerusalem, in Masada, in the Dead Sea, at Qumran. What a trip. You gotta go. In 1973 I was on an archaeological Dig on the south wall of the temple mount. That area today has been completely excavated and left open. We loved the Israel Museum and the model of the city in Jesus' day. We loved a huge underground man-made cave known as Hezekiah's Cave or Solomon's quarries – but more accurately Herod's quarries, right under much of the Arab part of the city. It's just beyond the Damascus Gate.

Nearby – across the street, near the Damascus Gate, are the traditional sites evangelicals prefer for the Garden Tomb, Golgotha. Catholics and Armenians prefer the sites under the Catholic Church of the Holy Sepulcher. Frankly, no one knows. Golgotha – or at least the 30-foot high or so cliff some believe is Golgotha – lies unceremoniously behind a noisy, stinky and busy bus station, an Arab bus station. As you face that cliff which indeed has caves in it somewhat like the eye sockets on a skull, to the left will be the evangelical site of the Garden Tomb. There were numerous small tour groups from various evangelical churches praying, visiting, singing hymns.

I have to admit, I felt a rush stepping inside the empty garden tomb and seeing the 2 spots where 2 bodies would have been laid, had it fulfilled its purpose. You could clearly see where the angel would have sat. Whether it was the real location or not, I definitely felt a rush as I stepped in.

We loved talking to the folks at Temple Institute and learning about the temple. We loved the tour of *Ir David* – the excavations of the old city of David. We loved walking the very hillsides and slopes where John the baptizer walked, sitting on the rocks and step stones at the newly excavated Pool of Siloam – the very rocks Jesus walked on. It was exciting standing with a group at Gihon Spring and shouting, “Long live the King!” on the very spot where Solomon was proclaimed king. It was terrific.

All in all – walking up the Mount of Olives, or back down through Gethsemane, then across the ravine they call the Kidron Valley, or stepping on to the Temple Mount square -- all in all, this was the trip of a lifetime. I’ve travelled in 24 countries, but this was the best trip ever. We loved it all. We loved visiting Jew or Muslim. We enjoyed being among the Palestinians, eating with them, experiencing their gracious hospitality, bargaining in their shops, and debating with their taxi drivers. Our Jewish hosts were likewise gracious and very kind. A great trip all around. This is a real passionate land, with real people and huge problems and great promise and potential – and danger. My heart goes out to Jew and Palestinian alike and my prayer is for the peace of this land.

### **Shabbat in Yerushalayim, the Devout vs the Secular**

Sabbath in Jerusalem is interesting. I’m told Haifa and Tel Aviv are much less religious, more secular, and I would have had a different experience than what I’m about to describe.

Much of Israel, like America, is a very secular state. But in Jerusalem at least, the Jews seem to take their religion much more seriously. A few words here, which a devout orthodox Jew would object to: in my opinion, Judaism as practiced today, is not at all the religion of Scripture, the Old Testament, or the religion of Moses for that matter. Having said that, you do see a fairly strong display of Orthodox Judaism in Jerusalem as well as in Zefat, the city of the priests and rabbis in northern Israel. But, in Tel Aviv, Haifa and other areas, we did not get the same devout feeling.

By devout, I mean the show of religion. Men with their head coverings (kipot, yarmulke, etc). Women in modest dress well below the knee, with hair covered. Many restaurants – but not all – in Jerusalem follow strict kosher laws. Many will not serve you a dinner that has both a meat product and a milk/butter product. Neither does El Al, the official airline. You can have meat and a roll -- but no butter, we found out. Or, you can have a roll with butter, but no meat at that dinner.

People greet one another with “Shalom”, or as the Sabbath draws near, they say “Shabbat Shalom.” Around Jerusalem, you will see strict observance of Shabbat (Sabbath). And, since many of these

are descendants of the ancient Pharisees, they put a fence around the law so they don't accidentally break the law. Hence, Shabbat to them does not begin at sunset, but 1-3 hours *before* sunset. It is considered offensive to even call someone 30-45 minutes before sunset Friday night: they are well into their Sabbath already. You could not find a bus or a taxi driven by Jews after 2 or 3 pm on Friday afternoons in March. Most stores, shops, even tourist attractions owned by Jews, offices, car rental places, bakeries, virtually all Jewish restaurants, places of employment -- all shut down, and shutter down by 2 or 3 pm certainly. There is a comparatively eerie calm that settles over the city compared to the extreme hustle bustle a few hours earlier. You could not go out to eat on a Friday night or Sabbath morning in Jerusalem, even if you wanted to, unless you go to the Christian or Arab quarters. That's food for thought, perhaps.

Anyway, what we learned the most while in Israel has to do with the Temple. They have not had a temple since 70 AD when the magnificent temple largely built and beautified by Herod, was totally destroyed. I learned that:

- Devout Jews pray 3x a day, facing Jerusalem, for a new temple, and for Yah to return His Shekinah glory. Every single Jew with whom I talked about the temple said one thing: "It is our hope." Same word every time. "Hope." Some take it as God saying they are not worthy of a temple, for every year that goes by without Him providing the way for them to build a new one.
- We learned so many things about temple rituals and demands that we didn't know before.
- We learned about the Temple Institute and how zealously this group of Orthodox Jews and Rabbis are preparing the articles, the people, the training, everything – to be ready to spring to action when given the chance to build a Temple Institute.
- We learned so much about the *Mikvehs*—the cleansing ritual baths and immersions people would have to do before going on to temple grounds.
- The temple itself is so much clearer now – its layout, procedures, protocol.
- And a clearer picture of whether or not there can be sacrificing hastily resumed.

So, let's talk about that now. Will there be a 3<sup>rd</sup> temple? I spent hours and hours on the Temple Mount, on the Mount of Olives overlooking it, at the Davidson Museum/archaeological Park, with the folks at the Temple Institute – as well as numerous websites I studied, books on the Temple I purchased and studied, as well as considerable insight from the book "The New Temple and the Second Coming" by Grant R. Jeffrey.

### **Objections commonly voiced to having a 3<sup>rd</sup> Temple?**

Will there be a literal, physical 3<sup>rd</sup> temple built by the Jews before the return of the Messiah?

There are many objections given for the idea of there ever being a real physical end time Temple before the coming of Messiah, including these points voiced (These are not necessarily my opinions however):

- Many feel we don't need a temple to fulfill prophecy; all we need is an altar and sacrificing going on. (I'll show how it's not going to be easy even just to set up sacrificing).
- There's not enough time or money to do it justice.
- The Arabs would never let the Jews build a temple on the Temple Mount where now stands their Dome of the Rock and Al Aqsa mosques. Surely, destroying the Arab buildings would lead to a long and difficult Jihad or holy war. But, bear me out. I'm aware of all that.
- Some insist any references to an end time temple refer solely to the church as God's spiritual temple, as many scriptures allude to. Therefore, they conclude there will be no physical temple.
- Others say any prophecies in the book of Daniel which refer to sacrifices being ended could be referring to spiritual sacrifices ....or many have speculated, "We don't need to have a temple to have physical sacrifices."
- Others point out that without a working Sanhedrin to formulate the laws and procedures to have a running temple, there would be no temple. But, that would apply to the daily Corban, the 9 am/3 pm daily animal sacrifices too. But, listen: they're formulating the new Sanhedrin in Israel even as I speak! They certainly are chronicling who the priests are. Training methods have begun.
- Others bring up the problem of "where is the holy anointing oil? The perfect red heifer? Where's the ark? Who will be the priests?" --I'll address all of these.

I alert you again to the caution I gave you on the topic of hearing God's voice: Don't be convinced by me or anyone else just because the speaker or writer is sure, or dogmatic, or speaks loudly. Especially be careful of anyone claiming to have "had a word from the Lord" and to be speaking for Yahweh. Base what you believe on what Scripture clearly says, backed up by what is factually correct – not by many, many misunderstandings out there. Until I went to Israel, I too had many things all confused about the temple. I'm still learning a lot about it and will continue to do so. So, even what I am about to say is only my best guess based on scripture and on what I learned while in Israel. I have not heard a voice from my Creator.

Most speakers who have spoken dogmatically about prophecies in the past 60 years have totally been proven wrong. We truly are a non-prophet organization, aren't we? God has a way of humbling us and coming up with ways to accomplish his plan that none of us could even dream of – even with the prophecies. We have a general outline, but when it's all said and done, many of us will be humbled by how far off base we were. So, let everything I say be with all of that warning: we're doing the best we can, but we truly don't know for sure if there will be a temple or not before Messiah returns. I say hear the case for and against, then be watching so you're not caught off guard.

What I did see, read and hear in Israel has pushed me firmly to the side, so far, of believing there will be a 3<sup>rd</sup> temple—and not just sacrifices.



### **Temple-related links and websites**

First, if you're interested in learning more about the temple, plans for the next one, let me give you 3 websites you'll find interesting:

A great website to see what the temple itself looked like in the days of Yeshua (Jesus) as He walked the earth, check out [www.imj.org.il/panavision/jerusalem\\_model\\_index.html](http://www.imj.org.il/panavision/jerusalem_model_index.html). It starts with a close-up photo of the temple itself and you can click on the upper left corner where it says Virtual Tour. This is the actual full-scale model one can spend an entire day studying at the Israel Museum in Jerusalem.

You can also check out a virtual panorama tour of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Temple – the one in Jesus' day – by going to this site: <http://www.archpark.org.il/panorama.shtml>. Then you'll see 6 various possible 360 degree panoramas you can choose from. You'll have a wonderful idea of what "going up to the House of Yahweh" would have been like in the past. This is the closest thing to actually seeing the temple the way Peter and Paul – and even Jesus –or Yeshua – would have seen it.

If you want to learn about the temple past and future – check this website out – that of The Temple Institute. At this site you can see the very pictures of the articles I speak of in preparing for the temple is the Temple Institute site: <http://www.templeinstitute.org/main.htm>

On this site you can also click on articles about the Red Heifer, The Temple mount, temple articles, and so on. Be sure you click on "Gallery" and enjoy the many incredible photos, paintings of what the temple was like inside, and so on. In the Gallery, find the section "A Day in the Life of the Holy Temple Exhibit" -- and there you will learn a lot. A wonderful lot! So, check out [www.templeinstitute.org/main.htm](http://www.templeinstitute.org/main.htm)

If you wish you could go to Israel, but, know you never can afford to, or are not likely to in the next 2-3 years, then go to Orlando FL, and be sure to go to Holy Land Experience, a tourist attraction, where they also have a model, though not nearly as large or elaborate as the one in the Israel Museum. But Bible Land Experience also has replicas of the temple itself, of the Tabernacle, the Garden Tomb, and so on. It's very realistic and worth the time and money especially if you can't afford to go to Israel itself. You can check out [www.holylandexperience.com](http://www.holylandexperience.com) if you want to check it out ahead of time. I recommend you do it. Those of you who go to the feast of Tabernacles in FL should take the time to check this out in Orlando. I'd go there again – and at the feast you have the money and time to do it. No, I'm not becoming a promoter for these places. It's just that I found our trip to Israel so indescribable, that I'm urging you to learn more about the Land of Israel, Jerusalem, the City of David, and the Temple.

### **General background first**

***The first temple*** was God's temple built by Solomon, a spectacular temple which stood for over 400 years before the Babylonians completely razed it to the ground and took off with all the gold and silver they could. Many believe even today that the Ark of the Covenant was hidden from the Babylonians. Inside the original ark were the broken 2 tablets of the 10 commandments written by the finger of God, as well as the pot of manna and Aaron's rod (a relatively short stick to be able to fit into the 45" ark with everything else; more like a cane or baton, than a rod). Presumably, some or all of those articles are still in the ark if the ark was hidden before the Babylonians arrived, including

the holy anointing oil, the pot of manna, and Aaron's rod. Some think its hidden deep beneath the Temple Mount; others say it was spirited away to Ethiopia deep underground an old church in northern Ethiopia – in a town called Aksum.

**THE HIDDEN ARK:** IF the ark was hidden in fact, then it no doubt has the necessary articles in it, or near it, to run the new temple service. It is presumed that some remnants of a past red heifer's ashes could also be stored nearby. *If the ark is ever discovered*, I think that would be a huge incentive to build the 3<sup>rd</sup> temple, *because King David's original purpose for building the temple – vs. the tabernacle – was David's desire to house the ark in something much more fitting and honorable than a portable tent, as glorious as it was.*

Where is the original ark? Stories are rife that Solomon let his son Prince Menelik 1, born from his union with the Queen of Sheba, take at least a replica of the ark back to Ethiopia. Others claim it was the original ark – but that makes little sense to me. Time permitting, I'll talk much more about Menelik and the ark later in the sermon.

*The 2<sup>nd</sup> temple* – started under Ezra and Nehemiah and mostly enlarged and completed by Herod the Great – was also a spectacular site. The sages said if one hadn't seen Herod's temple, he had never seen a beautiful building.

One thing many don't realize – very important -- is that *this 2<sup>nd</sup> temple never had the Shekinah glory* – the shimmering light above the mercy seat of the ark, indicating the presence of the Eternal. *Neither did the 2<sup>nd</sup> temple ever have an ark in the Holy of Holies.* Sometime before the first temple was destroyed that ark disappeared, presumably hidden in the deep vaults under the temple mount. Others claim it was shipped to Ethiopia, among the black Jews there, descendants of Solomon's marriage to the Queen of Sheba. The Ethiopian royal chronicles are full of these stories. The book of 2<sup>nd</sup> Maccabees has other explanations of what happened to the ark.

The Holy of Holies, which housed the ark, was called the *Kodesh Kodashim*. This is commonly accepted and known among Jews, but not so commonly known among Christians, who often assume the temple in Jesus' day had an ark in the Holy of Holies. No, it did not. *The Holy of Holies was an empty, bare room in the days of Christ and the apostles!* Did you know that?

None of the Jews and archaeologists and historians I've talked to and researched even question that. When the veil rent in two, the awful truth was revealed: there was no ark behind the curtain. Repeat: there was no ark in there. No mercy seat, no tablets of 10 commandments, nothing like that. So, that also tells you, that if they built a temple before without an ark – they could do it again. But, if they ever find the true ark, if it was hidden – it will be a huge motivator to build a temple around it!

In 70 AD the Romans burned it to the ground and dismantled it stone by stone, so Jesus' prophecy that not one stone will be left on top another came true. Since 70 AD, the Jews have not had a temple.

Matthew 24:32-34 says to think of the very last days like watching the budding of **the fig tree**. Just like the eagle is a well-known symbol of the USA, the maple leaf for Canada, the fig tree has long been a symbol of Israel. *The budding of the fig tree could refer to the birth of Israel as a nation in 1948.* Jesus said that generation wouldn't pass before the Messiah returns. Someone born in 1948 is

now in his/her early 60's. Life expectancies are easily into the 80's and beyond. That could indicate some real traction within the next 20 years—but I hesitate to say “in 2-3-5 years” like some preachers are.

Others note that Yeshua didn't speak of the new initial growth of the fig tree as a seedling, but when it shot out its tender leaves as a mature tree. Israel as a new nation with real borders and their own legislative body in their own free land, was born in 1947 as a UN manifesto, and then realized in 1948. Perhaps, it would be 20 years later before it could be considered a maturing nation. Perhaps, that generation could start from those born just before or during the 1967 war, when Israel took control of all of Jerusalem for the first time. By that time, 20 years had passed since the 1947 UN resolution to partition Palestine and create an Israeli state alongside an Arab one. Their nation was born 1948, the following year. On that basis, that generation of people could live all the way to 2047.

I'm not a believer in setting dates. I just want to reiterate what I've said before: Be ready, now, for the end time to come suddenly – or to appear to be taking much longer than we had hoped. Our own end could happen any time. We should always be ready, whether the Christ returns tomorrow – or 40 years from now – or something in between. We should always be awake, be awake.

It was not those who “had it figured out” who were saved – as in the parable of the 10 virgins. No, it was those who had oil in their lamps. They were living a spirit-led life. They were close to Yahweh. He knew them and they knew Yahweh (see my sermons about “Knowing God”.) So, our focus should be on our *relationship* being strong with God – and not be focused on trying to figure out every word of prophecy. We may know all prophecy, but without love for God and fellow man, we are nothing (1 Corinthians 13:1-3).

So, as we talk about the temple, keep these words in mind: God will take care of His people if we know him and He knows us; if our lives are characterized by love for God and man. It ultimately doesn't matter if we fully grasp now what will happen with the temple. But – on the other hand – it does make for interesting thought. But, just keep your priorities straight: relationship, relationship, relationship.

So, have you prayed today? And yesterday? Would Yahweh be pleased with your conduct, words, and activities over the last 4-5 days? Have you reached out to Him and to His people? Are you demonstrating love for God and man in everything you do? Are you drinking in of his word every single day? Is HE your priority every morning, every day? Those points are the priorities.

With all that in mind, let's continue with the temple. And, remember WE are God's temple today. But I also feel the Jews will build a 3<sup>rd</sup> physical building.

***Every Jew you talk to speaks of their “HOPE”*** – same word they all use – that there will be a 3<sup>rd</sup> temple. Devout Jews to this day pray 3x a day for the restoration of that temple. The only place they can build it is the holy temple mount – controlled now by Arabs. Moshe Dayan gave them that control even though Israel won the 1967 war and effectively conquered all of Jerusalem including the Temple mount. I was told General Dayan was not a devout God-fearing man and did not realize what a huge decision, what a huge mistake it was, to let the Palestinians have that temple mount area.

Today, no Jew is allowed on to the Temple mount by the Arabs, and neither would a good Jew *want* to go there, since the Rabbis forbid it, as long as it remains trampled underfoot by the Gentiles. The late General Dayan simply let the Arabs continue to control the Temple mount area, the Jews' holiest site of all – as a way for the Arabs to save face after a terrible defeat in 1967. Orthodox Jews have never forgiven him for that. But, I found that Orthodox Jews would never build another temple on any site, on any ground, other than where the former temple was built. That's the only place it could be, they say.

**Will there be a 3<sup>rd</sup> temple?** I am personally starting to believe the likelihood gets stronger by the day. The notion that the Jews could even just start up the sacrificial system again rather easily is bogus. Here's what has been made very, very clear to me since our trip:

- WE in the west think it would be no trouble to build an altar, bring a few sheep and start sacrificing. Done, we think. But, not so easy. Even without a temple, there would have to be a lot of preparations and trainings before sacrificing could happen.
  - No sacrifice nowadays except on Mount Moriah. They can't just do it any ol' place. Until they find a way to have an altar on ground now occupied and controlled by Muslims, and covered by 2 of their holy buildings (Al Aqsa and Dome of the Rock) – it's going to be tough.
  - There cannot be sacrificing without an ordained priesthood. To have an ordained priesthood, you have to know who are descendants of Aaron, find them, purify them, ordain them and train them in the exact process. No priests until all that happens.
  - There can be no altar or sacrificing or temple until the whole temple mount, the stones, the pavement, the altars, the utensils and instruments used, are all first cleansed by specific waters of purification. There simply have been too many men and women killed there since 70 AD, defiling the grounds. *The only way to cleanse the mount is using special water that includes ashes from a qualified red heifer.* They have not found a qualified heifer yet – all red, not a single black or brown or white hair is allowed. [UPDATE: as of 2011-2012, there are reports now of 2-3 red heifers in Israel!]
  - There are also a host of logistical issues of sanitation, a system to wash off all the blood, offal, dirt, hair, and flies. In the times of the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> temples, there was an elaborate channeling system to wash away dirt, blood, ashes, and so on. That has to be built too. We're talking about thousands and thousands of animals here!
  - There's more, much more. People didn't just come and start sacrificing. They had to take a purification bath near the temple before going on temple grounds. Every time. Every one. We saw many of these *mikvehs* – places where men and women, presumably separately, had to dip and be immersed before coming on to the temple. Even Yeshua had to. Those tubs and baths have to be set up too.

I realize you may be saying “where in scripture is all this required?” Well, a lot of it is there, and then there's Judaism of course, which many of us feel goes beyond the requirements of God. But, that's still what the Jew believes he has to do first.

Presumably, there could be sacrificing without the temple itself, but I also found that the orthodox Jew sees this as a complete package. They couldn't envisage sacrificing without at least having the process of building the 3<sup>rd</sup> temple going on. Remember that the 2<sup>nd</sup> Temple was in constant construction mode, but they used it nonetheless.

But, overall, in MY view, based on firsthand experience with people on the scene, I don't think we'll see sacrifices happening without the agreement and decision to build a temple. Daniel 9:24-27 speaks of animal sacrifices being halted – so we know that much will be re-implemented. I believe truly that Daniel 9 is very much a prophecy about our Messiah and His sacrifice, but I now also feel it is largely dual – that there will be sacrifices and a temple again in the future as well.

I think how this all shakes down at the end will amaze us all as we look back at what God has done.

Also note that if there is a 3<sup>rd</sup> temple, even Paul ***calls it “the temple of God”*** in 2 Thessalonians 2:4. The great anti-Christ will sit as god, in the temple of God, it says. Sometimes, we of the Christian faith minimize what the Jews have done and we claim even the temple Jesus visited was not God's house. That's nonsense. Even Jesus, when cleansing the temple with its corruption and evil high priests, still referred to it as “My Father's House.” So, keep that in mind.

### **Preparation for 3<sup>RD</sup> Temple Well Underway**

***Now, what might surprise you is how much of this preparation for the 3<sup>rd</sup> temple is going on behind the scenes!*** It's a matter of the old saying that “opportunity meets preparation.” Prepare as if – and things happen. We saw with our own eyes, a lot of that preparation – at least the preparation of the roles of the priesthood and the gold and silver articles. Keep listening... as I'll soon explain more of what I mean by “preparation.” It is absolutely astounding. I think the world is going to be surprised at how fast Israel appears to be able to get it all together if the opportunity to build a temple comes along. Many won't realize all the years and years of required preparation had been going on all along!

We spent considerable time with the folks at Temple Institute. Look up their web site.

- They've identified who the Levites and priests are. Descendants of Aaron – the priests – have a very unique, provable gene in their DNA code. The Hebrew for “priest” is Cohen. Apparently, among Jews, only those who are truly descendants of Aaron have a name derived from Cohen – Cohen, Cahn, Kuhn, Kahane and so forth. These people likely are priests or descendants of Aaron. But, there's another factor: DNA. The long and short of it is that it's been proven that descendants of Aaron all have the same DNA makeup. Without it, you're not a priest.

Scientists and geneticists a few years ago discovered a Y-chromosome DNA lineage signature shared by most *Ashkenazi* and *Sephardic* Kohanim (or Cohenim). Sephardic Jews mostly come from Spain or southern Mediterranean, and Ashkenazi Jews usually are those from Europe or farther north than the Sephardic. My point is: one can now prove whether or not he is a priest by matching up the DNA. Sons of Aaron have 45 chromosomes with 1 very unique one, making the total of 46, proving they descend from the line of Aaron over 3,000 years ago.

- They've identified hundreds of Levites. Over 500 young Jewish Levites have already been trained in their duties of temple rituals and worship. They were trained in their Orthodox Yeshiva's – equivalent to our Bible colleges.
- Special herds of cattle that could produce the Red Heifer required for the temple are being bred in Finland, Texas – and now in Israel. See Numbers 19:2, 5, 9 about the red heifer. You'll notice in Numbers 19:6 that the ashes were mixed with cedar wood and hyssop and scarlet. Hyssop oil has a built-in antifungal and antibacterial quality. Rabbi Maimonides said there have been only NINE total red heifers sacrificed from the first one offered by Moses, to the destruction of the temple in 70 AD. The 2<sup>nd</sup> one was by Ezra, then 5-7 more after Ezra to 70 AD. That's all.
- The anointing oil: the 2 chief rabbis of Israel are in possession of the special anointing oil. So that's ready.
- They've discovered the very elusive and rare mollusk that produced the deep blue dye for the High Priest's garments. They had thought it was extinct, but it has been discovered in the Red Sea. The temple Institute is acquiring and producing more and more of this special dye.
- Hundreds of priestly garments have been produced. The High Priest's garments and crown are ready. We saw them with our own eyes.
- The 7' golden menorah that will be used in any 3<sup>rd</sup> temple is ready. We saw it with our own eyes. It is behind bulletproof glass. We also saw with our own eyes, and took pictures of, the finished Table of Shewbread, the altar of incense, the silver trumpets, the 10 stringed lyres, the 22 stringed harps, the many shofars, the garments for priests, the high priest's breastplate stones have been identified and assembled, the utensils to scoop up the ashes – and many others. Over 100 instruments and utensils have been created and sit ready for use. Even the laver of cleansing. It's all there. We have pictures we took. You can also go on the Temple Institute website and see these for yourself.
  - What we didn't see yet were actual stones for the building, though we took pictures of 2 large stones a synagogue is claiming are for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Temple.
  - We didn't see the veil to the Holy of Holies, the Ark, or any Shekinah glory of course.
- You need the Sanhedrin to be in play before any of this happens. They announce the dates of the holydays, and they choose the priests and ordain them. In July 2005, the new Sanhedrin was formed and met in Jerusalem for the first time. I don't believe they have any real legislative authority in Israel or are recognized by the civil courts, but the point is—when the time is right, they know who the top sages and rabbis are who will populate this court.
- The Levites and priests who would blow the silver trumpets, the shofars (rams horns) and play the harps are also being trained and getting used to their instruments.

Are you hearing this? With this much preparation going on as never before, they're going to be ready to spring into action quickly when the time comes. I can't say any rocks are being quarried yet – but I wouldn't put it past the Orthodox Jews to be secretly getting the Temple stones cut out. Maybe not. I don't know.

**Now, Some “What Ifs” to Consider:**

Right now, the long and short of it is this: it would take divine intervention and miracles to be able to rebuild a 3<sup>rd</sup> temple. Yahweh can change the hearts of man. He can soften hearts, and He can harden hearts. That's #1. He can also create what we even call “Acts of God” to draw attention to things.

I will also say, based on my many on-the-spot conversations and research, that I believe IF something that appears to be *an Act of God happens to give Israel an unexpected opportunity* to build their 3rd Temple – I believe they'll jump at the chance *and they will be ready* to take advantage of the opportunity. Did you know Al Aqsa has been leveled more than 2x now from massive **earthquakes** in its history, for example? In 747 and 1033 AD, the mosque had to be rebuilt. There were other earthquakes besides. A sudden earthquake leveling the Dome of the Rock and Al Aqsa, for example -- coupled with finding the original Ark, – would be probably enough to create a frenzy of activity! Israel sits on or near the Syrian-African rift fault line and scientists agree Jerusalem is overdue for a massive earthquake in the 6.5-8.0 Richter scale range. We know from scripture, that just before Jesus returns, there will in fact be an earthquake so massive it splits the Mt of Olives in two (Zechariah 14). So there certainly can be other earthquakes before that one.

I think if we ever see one or more of these:

- The temple mount buildings that are currently there destroyed by a massive earthquake.
- combined with the discovery – or revelation-- of the ancient ark or other crucial elements,
- combined with the completed formation of a true working Sanhedrin with real legislative authority-- and training of the priests (which I understand is already going on).
- Then, I think we could see decisions to build a 3<sup>rd</sup> temple move very quickly, regardless of riots and the inevitable jihad, which would be called by the Arabs. Just food for thought. Not enough time to get it done? If much of the work is already done – we might be surprised how fast the altar of sacrifice and the temple could come together.

There's another possibility. Reading the book of Revelation chapter 11:1-4 about the 2 Witnesses in the end time, we see that they were to measure the temple, the altar and those who worship there. Read it. It clearly refers to an altar of sacrifice as well as a temple. Many want to make those verses purely spiritual in meaning. What if it also applies to a *physical*, literal temple, altar and so forth?

So, he was to measure the temple and altar, but not to measure the court of the Gentiles. Right now the Gentiles' area – the Dome of the Rock and Al Aqsa – are where the gentiles are and that's to the south of where more and more are saying the Temple should be built.

Frankly, there are serious arguments for several possible locations where the Temple should be built. Most say it must be on the very site occupied by the Dome of the Rock. Others put it to the south of that. Others say to the north of the Dome of the rock.

We know that many writers say the Temple was directly lined up with the Eastern Gate – on the Mt of Olives side of the city walls. But, the East gate is quite a bit north of the Dome of the Rock. So, more and more people believe that Revelation is telling us that the Dome of the Rock and Al Aqsa could remain in operation alongside the Jews' temple operating to the north of the Dome of the Rock: "for it has been given to the Gentiles" (Revelation 11:3).

Admittedly, that's hard to imagine happening. But, then again, so much of what Yahweh does is hard to imagine ahead of time. The True God can change human hearts. There's plenty of room to the north of the Dome of the Rock. I've recently walked all over that area and looked at it from that point of view in mind. And, why would John say that otherwise, in Revelation?

However, to the north of the Dome of the Rock are several Muslim schools or colleges, maybe even several Madrasas. There's an olive grove there as well. Also, the level of the square drops down several steps. Remember, Al Aqsa isn't on the same level as the Dome of the Rock, either. You have to go up some stairs to get to the main square where the Dome of the Rock is. But, anyway, these things I'm saying can be rectified.

My point is: perhaps it's even possible to build a temple to the north of the Dome of the Rock, all while the Dome is operating also. There could be a wall or gate built to separate the two. There's certainly room for that. Remember, the total Temple Mount area is 35 square acres.

What I've just described fits also into the possibility that the world will make Jerusalem an international city, open to all religions. Perhaps in return for giving up control of the entire city, a world body will offer Israel part or all of the Temple Mount in return. We don't know: just be watching carefully. We'll just have to wait and see.

But, more and more, I'm convinced there will likely be a 3<sup>rd</sup> temple. The entire temple mount area today is about 35 acres. Probably much bigger than you might have thought.

Finally, let's talk briefly again about the ARK: I have no idea if it is under the temple mount secreted away in some vaulted area or not. There are stories of 3 men having seen it from 50 feet away, but since then the Muslims have sealed off the entrances with concrete. This is according to Dr. Randall Price. I don't know.

Stories abound of the true ark somehow being under a church in northern Ethiopia. I've read up on Prince Menelik 1, son of Solomon and the Queen of Sheba – and their descendants all the way to Haile Selassie, who called himself the Lion of Judah. I've read about the Ethiopian black Jews – called the *Falashas*-- and how they're being accepted in droves into Israel. Other stories are that the Jewish authorities paid to have the ark secretly returned already to Jerusalem. I have details on all these variations, including stories about and by Ron Wyatt's studies.

Regardless, if God wants to reveal or find the ark – it will be revealed some day. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Temple had no ark. So, perhaps we can imagine the 3<sup>rd</sup> temple won't have to have one either. Some feel



scriptures indicate otherwise. We'll have to wait and see. God hasn't spoken clearly to me about this – so I can't claim to be 100% sure either.

I just wanted this sermon to give you some idea of what's percolating over there.

I'm out of time. As we talk about the physical temple, continue to remember Yahweh is busy building His spiritual temple – the Bride of Christ, the church of spirit-filled believers led by His Holy Spirit.

My heart's desire would be to have millions of spirit-filled, converted Arabs as my brothers. And millions more Jews, spirit filled, converted to Yahweh's true way. You see, they've muddied up God's way with modern Judaism. I do not believe Judaism is the religion of Moses, though I'm going to be smacked hard by Orthodox Jews for saying that. Judaism, as practiced by modern descendants of Phariseeism – the ultra-orthodox Jews – is the very thing Yeshua decried. Turning God's commands into mush by their traditions. There are traditions for everything! Everything! In practice, Orthodox Jews don't regard what Scripture says as highly as they regard what famous Rabbis say. That is very frustrating when you're trying to discuss things with the rabbis – as we experienced.

I will share many, many more of the things we learned and saw firsthand, as they make sense to include in future sermons.

If you can, you've gotta go to Israel. It won't be inexpensive, but worth every dollar. I'd love to go again and even help lead a group. But, if you go, don't try to see all of Israel in 4-5 days. You won't have done it justice. I don't understand those church groups that have the feast in Jordan – and then go see Israel for a few days after the Feast. That's completely backward. We should be keeping the feast in Israel, when given the chance, not Jordan. I don't know who made that decision, but it seems off base to me. I'm sure costs, logistics, convenience – oh, convenience factors into a lot of these decisions – rather than seeing where God would have preferred for us to meet to worship Him.

God hasten the day when we can all go to Jerusalem – but this time descending from heaven with our Master and King, after the Wedding Supper, as we prepare to finally help Him implement His plans to bring peace, shalom, to the City of Shalom – to Yerushalayim.

As the Jews say, "Next year, in Yerushalayim".

My next sermon will be about Pentecost, the feast of First fruits, the Feast of Weeks.

God bless you all, until next time – this is Philip Shields, your brother in Christ, my dear brothers and sisters in the Messiah.

