



Does the Bible Teach that the Temple Will be Rebuilt?

Mar 31, 2020 by Gary DeMar

As usual, I found myself dealing with a prophecy expert who assured me that I am wrong because I am not reading the Bible properly. That may be true, but I must be shown from the Bible where I have missed the mark. He assured me that the temple will be rebuilt and many other standard end-time events. Here's what he wrote:

There is [*sic*] tons in scripture concerning these things. It may not fit our preferred theological construct, but they are there, nonetheless.

I wrote back and said that I'm **not** looking for "tons ... I'll settle for an ounce from Scripture."

I have yet to find one person who can quote one verse from the New Testament that unequivocally states that a physical temple will be/should be built again in Jerusalem.

Some modern-day Jews are preparing for the reinstitution of animal sacrifices and rebuilding the temple:

The Passover sacrifice can only be offered in one place; on the Temple Mount. The sacrifice does not require an actual Temple structure but it does require an altar that is built to adhere to the Biblical requirements. Such an altar was constructed last year and stands ready.... "The Third oath is the Third Temple

whose construction will be initiated by the nations, after which the Jews will join in.” ([Breaking Israel News](#))

If you want to get an idea what the abomination of desolation was ([Matt. 24:15](#)), this is it. The religious establishment continued with the sacrificial system in the rebuilt temple, completed around AD 64 and destroyed by the Romans in AD 70, in the place of the true Lamb of God. Those sacrifices were an affront to the redemptive work of Jesus, and in God’s eyes were like the following:

But he who kills an ox is like one who slays a man;
He who sacrifices a lamb is like the one who breaks a dog’s neck;
He who offers a grain offering is like one who offers swine’s blood;
He who burns incense is like the one who blesses an idol.
As they have chosen their own ways,
And their soul delights in their abominations ([Isa. 66:3](#)).

There is no need for a temple or animal sacrifice. Those days are long gone. Jesus was that final sacrifice, the lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. There is no need for an altar or a temple or the Aaronic priesthood. Jesus fulfills all of these.

Unfortunately, dispensationalists continually insist that for Bible prophecy to be fulfilled, the temple must be rebuilt, the altar constructed, and animal sacrifices reinstitution as part of some unfulfilled prophetic history.

Even dispensationalists admit the NT does not say the temple will be rebuilt. For the dispensational system to work, however, a temple must be built. A doctrine so central to a system must have at least one verse supporting that system. The temple is mentioned numerous times in the NT, sometimes symbolically (John 2; [1 Cor. 3:16](#); [6:19](#); [2 Cor. 6:16](#); [1 Pet. 2:4–9](#)) and sometimes physically (e.g., [Matt. 21:12](#); [24:1–2](#); [26:65](#); [2 Thess. 2](#)), but nothing is said about it being rebuilt only destroyed.

Dispensational premillennialists need a future “tribulation temple” so their idea of antichrist can take his seat ([2 Thess. 2:4](#)). place a statue for people to worship ([Rev.](#)

13:14–15), and proclaim himself to be god (2 Thess. 2:4). But what the dispensationalists really need is a verse that states that there will be *another* rebuilt temple since there had already been one. Rebuilt-temple advocates Thomas Ice and Randall Price admit that “There are no Bible verses that say, ‘There is going to be a third temple.’” [1] Having made this revealing concession, they go on to claim, “there will be a Jewish Temple in Jerusalem at least by the midpoint of the seven-year tribulation period.” [2]

Don Stewart and Chuck Missler insist, “The crucial issue boils down to how we interpret prophecy. There are two basic ways to interpret Bible prophecy. Either you understand it literally or you do not. If a person rejects the literal interpretation then they [*sic*] are left to their own imagination as to what the Scripture means.... We believe it makes sense to understand the Scriptures as literally requiring the eventual construction and desecration of a Third Temple.” [3] The authors are careful only to say that another rebuilt temple is *required*. A third temple is required only if you’re a dispensationalist. To repeat, the NT does not mention anything about a rebuilt temple.

Jesus’ completed redemptive work makes the need for a rebuilt temple unnecessary. His ministry begins with the declaration that He is our tabernacle (John 1:14), “the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world” (1:29), “the temple” (John 2:19–21), and the “chief cornerstone” (Matt. 21:42; Acts 4:11; Eph. 2:20). By extension, believers are “as living stones, ... being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 2:5). Those “in Christ” are the true temple of God (1 Cor. 3:16; 2 Cor. 6:16; Eph. 2:21; Rev. 21:22).

Jesus and the people of God are the focus of the only temple that has any redemptive significance. To be “in Christ” is to be in the temple and all it stood for, “the renewed centre and focus for the people of God” [4] (Rom. 12:5; 1 Cor. 1:2, 30; Gal. 3:14, 28; 5:6). The NT references to the temple of stone only refer to its destruction (Matt. 24:1–2), never its reconstruction. It is highly significant that “Jesus never gives any hint that there will be a physical replacement for this Temple. There is no suggestion, either in the

Apocalyptic Discourse or elsewhere, that this destruction will be but a preliminary stage in some glorious ‘restoration’ of the Temple.” ^[5]

The writer of Hebrews declares that Jesus entered “through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation” (9:11). Since Jesus completed His redemptive work, any new temple “made with hands” is not much different from a pagan temple that has no inherent life or redemptive value (cf. [Acts 17:24](#); [19:26](#); [2 Cor. 5:1](#)). “[T]he description of the Jerusalem Temple as ‘made with hands’ ... is a strong means of playing down its significance. This had been a way of belittling the pagan idols (e.g. [Ps. 115:4](#); cf. [Isa. 46:6](#)); to describe the Temple in such a fashion was potentially incendiary.” ^[6] This is because “the author of Hebrews believed the Jerusalem Temple was but a ‘shadow’ of the reality now found in Christ (8:5).” ^[7]

The “new covenant” had made the “old covenant” obsolete that was ready (near) to pass away (8:13).

Stewart and Missler have made it very simple for us to determine whether the Bible addresses the issue of a rebuilt temple. If the Bible is interpreted literally, the need for a third temple should be explicitly stated. What biblical evidence do they offer to support their claim that “the Bible, in both testaments, speaks of a Temple that has yet to appear”? ^[8] From the OT they use [Daniel 9:27](#), [11:31](#), and [12:11](#) for support. Ice and Price can only find only one verse for support—[Daniel 9:27](#).

Since Daniel was written *after* Solomon’s temple had been destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar in 586 BC ([2 Kings 25:8–9](#); [Dan. 1:1–2](#)) and *before* the *second* temple had been built by the returning exiles ([Ezra 6:13–15](#)), it stands to reason that the “sanctuary” whose “end will come with a flood” ([Dan. 9:26](#)) must refer to the second temple that had not been built at the time the prophecy was given. It was this post-exile rebuilt temple that was desecrated by Antiochus Epiphanes around 170 BC but not destroyed. After a period of misuse and disuse, Herod the Great restored and enlarged this second temple, a project that started around 20 BC and was completed just a few

years before it was destroyed in AD 70 by the Romans, just as Jesus had predicted ([Matt. 24:1–34](#)).

It was this same temple that Zacharias served in ([Luke 1:9](#)), that Jesus was taken to as an infant (2:27) and later taught in (2:41–52), that had been under construction for forty-six years when Jesus prophesied that He would be its permanent replacement ([John 2:20](#)), that Jesus cleansed of the money changers ([Matt. 21:12](#)), that He predicted would be left desolate ([Matt. 23:38; 24:2](#)), whose veil was “torn in two from top to bottom” ([Matt. 27:51](#)), and that was finally destroyed by Titus in AD 70.

[Daniel 9:27](#) is the only verse from the OT that Ice and Price contend supports the need for a third temple. But there is a problem with their reasoning. They argue that “the city and sanctuary” in [Daniel 9:26](#) refers to Herod’s temple that was destroyed in AD 70 ([Luke 21:6](#)): “Jesus, seeing Himself as *the Messiah*, therefore saw the Romans as *the people ... who will destroy the city and the sanctuary*. Knowing that He would soon be *cut off* (crucified), He likewise knew that the Temple’s destruction would soon occur.” ^[9]

In the span of two verses, these authors find two temples, one in [Daniel 9:26](#) and another in 9:27, separated by 2000 years. As a careful reader will note, the “sanctuary” (temple) that appears in [Daniel 9:26](#) does not appear in 9:27. This means that [Daniel 9:27](#) is describing events related to the already mentioned sanctuary of 9:26 that Ice and Price say refers to the temple that was standing in Jesus’ day.

For Ice and Price to find another rebuilt temple, [Daniel 9:27](#) would have to say something like this: “After an unspecified period of time, he will make a firm covenant with the many for one week, but in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering **in the sanctuary after the sanctuary is rebuilt a second time**; and on the wing of abominations will come one who makes desolate, even until a complete destruction **of the sanctuary after the next sanctuary**, one that is decreed, is poured out on the one who makes desolate.” Of course, not one word of this is found in [Daniel 9:27](#). ^[10]

1. Thomas Ice and Randall Price, *Ready to Rebuild: The Imminent Plan to Rebuild the Last Days Temple* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 1992), 197–198.[\[↩\]](#)
2. Ice and Price, *Ready to Rebuild*, 198.[\[↩\]](#)
3. Don Stewart and Chuck Missler, *The Coming Temple: Center Stage for the Final Countdown* (Orange, CA: Dart Press, 1991), 193.[\[↩\]](#)
4. Timothy J. Geddert, *Watchwords: Mark 13 in Markan Eschatology* (Sheffield, England: JSOT, 1989). Quoted in Peter W. L. Walker, *Jesus and the Holy City: New Testament Perspectives on Jerusalem* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1996), 9.[\[↩\]](#)
5. Walker, *Jesus and the Holy City*, 8.[\[↩\]](#)
6. Walker, *Jesus and the Holy City*, 10.[\[↩\]](#)
7. Walker, *Jesus and the Holy City*, 208.[\[↩\]](#)
8. Stewart and Missler, *The Coming Temple*, 194.[\[↩\]](#)
9. Ice and Price, *Ready to Rebuild*, 68.[\[↩\]](#)
10. For an exposition of [Daniel 9:24–27](#), see Gary DeMar, *Last Days Madness: Obsession of the Modern Church*, 4th ed. (Powder Springs, GA: American Vision, 1999), chap. 25.[\[↩\]](#)

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