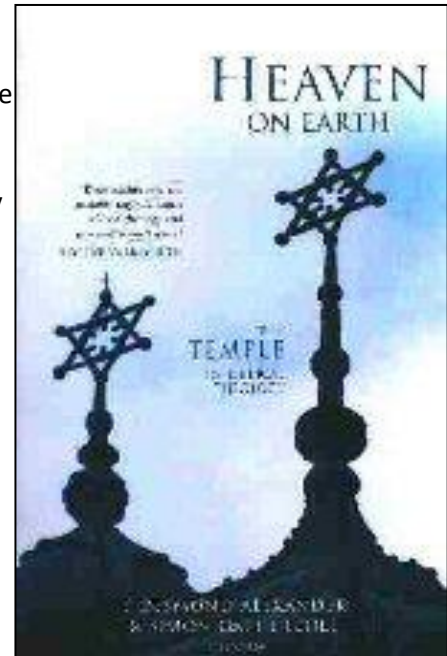


# The Jewish Temple in Contemporary Christian Zionism

Heaven on Earth : The Temple in Biblical Theology,  
ed. Desmond Alexander & Simon Gathercole (Paternoster 2004)

On January 8, 2001, former Shin Bet secret service chief Carmi Gillon and former police commissioner Assaf Hefetz together with leading Israeli academics delivered a report to the then Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak detailing their concerns regarding plots by Jewish extremist groups to blow up the Dome of the Rock and Al-Aqsa Mosque.<sup>1</sup> Keshev, the Centre for the Protection of Democracy based in Tel Aviv, founded by Gillon and Hefetz following the assassination of Rabin, published a 12 page report entitled, "Target Temple Mount" which examined current threats to the Temple Mount from extreme militant and Messianic groups. The report claimed, 'The Temple Mount is like a smouldering volcano that is bubbling and threatening to erupt - a threat that is liable to endanger Israel's existence.'<sup>2</sup> In 1999, the US Anti-Defamation League (ADL) included Gershon Salomon, leader of the Temple Mount Faithful, on a list of "threats to (US) national security."<sup>3</sup>



On the 8th January 2001, 500,000 secular, religious and ultra-Orthodox Jews gathered near the Temple Mount at the Western Wall, 'and swore faithfulness to the Temple Mount and Jerusalem.'<sup>4</sup> In July 2001 the Rabbinical Council of Judea, Samaria and Gaza called on all rabbis to bring their communities to visit the Temple Mount. This was the first time a group of rabbis representing a significant proportion of the religious Jewish community had ruled it permissible for Jews to ascend the Temple Mount. Previously this had been forbidden. The rabbis also called upon the Yesha Council of Jewish settlements to organise mass visits to the Temple Mount from the settlements. Settlement residents tend to be the more politically right wing religious Jews.<sup>5</sup> During the same month, the Israeli Supreme Court made a significant decision, once again, for the first time, allowing the Temple Mount Faithful to hold a symbolic cornerstone laying ceremony for the Third Temple near the Dung Gate adjacent to the Western Wall. Each year attempts are made by the Temple Mount Faithful to place a three ton stone on the Temple Mount on Tisha b'Av (29th July) when the Jews mourn the destruction of the first and second Temples and also during the Feast of Sukkoth (usually early October).<sup>6</sup> Muslims see this as further indication that Zionists are attempting to take the Temple Mount area by force, destroy the Dome of the Rock and rebuild the Jewish Temple on the site.<sup>7</sup>



This paper will examine the reasons why Christian Zionists believe so passionately that the rebuilding of the Jewish Temple is imminent and actively support those committed to achieving it.<sup>8</sup> Belief in a rebuilt Jewish temple lies at the heart of the controversy concerning the claim to exclusive Jewish sovereignty over Jerusalem as well as the expansion of the borders of Israel to include not only the Palestinian Territories but, based on the literal fulfilment of Genesis 15:18, most of the Middle East from Egypt to the Euphrates.<sup>9</sup>



We should not forget... that the supreme purpose of the ingathering of exiles and the establishment of our state is the building of the temple. The temple is at the very top of the pyramid.<sup>10</sup>

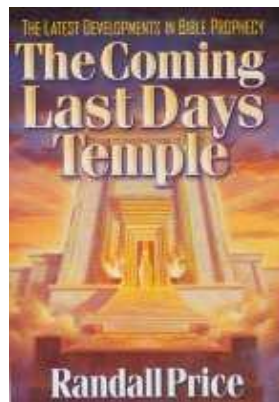
It is all a matter of sovereignty. He who controls the Temple Mount, controls Jerusalem. And he who controls Jerusalem, controls the land of Israel.<sup>11</sup>

Using an analogy of three concentric rings, the Land represents the outer ring, Jerusalem the middle and the Temple the centre. The three rings comprise the Zionist expansionist agenda of which the outer was claimed in 1948, the middle in 1967 and the inner now under heightened threat.

## 1. Introduction : The Temple of Prayer

### The Importance of the Temple to Jews and Zionist Christians

For the past 19 centuries, religious Jews have prayed three times a day, "May it be Thy will that the Temple be speedily rebuilt in our days."<sup>12</sup> Randall Price claims that the Torah, 'obligates the Jewish nation to rebuild the Temple whenever it becomes possible to do so (Ex 25:8).'<sup>13</sup> However, when IDF Chaplain Rabbi Shlomo Goren blew the shofar and performed a religious ceremony near the Dome of the Rock on the Temple Mount in August 1967 just days after its capture, he was criticised by both the secular Israeli press and orthodox Jews.<sup>14</sup> By 1989 Time Magazine reported the findings of a survey showing that some 20 years later, 18% of Israelis thought it was time to rebuild the Temple.<sup>15</sup> A similar Gallup poll was conducted in Israel in 1996 to assess opinions on the question of sovereignty over the Temple Mount and the rebuilding the Jewish Temple. It found that 58% of Israelis now supported the Temple Mount Faithful and therebuilding the Jewish Temple. This was allegedly the largest show of support any organisation had ever received in Israel on any subject. Significantly, the highest percentage of support came from young Israelis.<sup>16</sup> A simple Internet search of the words 'Temple Mount' reveals 351,000 pages. Add the word 'Christian' and there are still 54,300 web pages of data.<sup>17</sup>



Contemporary Christian Zionists who have written on the rebuilding of a Jewish Temple include Thomas Ice and Randall Price<sup>18</sup>, Grant Jeffrey<sup>19</sup>, Hal Lindsey<sup>20</sup>, Tim LaHaye<sup>21</sup> and Dave Hunt.<sup>22</sup> Their combined published book sales exceed 70 million in more than 50 languages. Their views are therefore influential and cannot be dismissed as marginal or esoteric. They are endorsed by some of the largest theological colleges and missionary institutions<sup>23</sup> as well as a significant proportion of evangelical, Charismatic, Pentecostal and fundamentalist Christians world-wide. Grace Halsell speculates that 10% of Americans support

this movement.<sup>24</sup>

Other Christian Zionist leaders including James DeLoach, Terry Risenhoover and Doug Kreiger have also been influential in gathering significant American financial and political support for extreme Jewish organisations such as Gush Emunim and the Temple Mount Faithful.<sup>25</sup> Christian and Jewish Zionists are united in the conviction that the Muslim Dome of the Rock must be destroyed, the third Jewish Temple built, priests consecrated and sacrifices reinstituted in fulfilment of biblical prophecy and to ensure the coming of Messiah.<sup>26</sup>

Christian Zionists see the founding of the State of Israel in 1948 and the capture of Jerusalem in 1967 as highly significant, signalling the end of 2000 years exile, and the end of the 'Times of the Gentiles'. Hal Lindsey is regarded as the 'Father of the Modern-Day Bible Prophecy movement'<sup>27</sup> and a leading representative of Christian Zionists. He insists the Temple Mount is 'the most disputed 35 acres on the Planet',<sup>28</sup> and the fate of the earth will be determined by its contested ownership.<sup>29</sup>

Obstacle or no obstacle, it is certain that the Temple will be rebuilt. Prophecy demands it... With the Jewish nation reborn in the land of Palestine, ancient Jerusalem once again under total Jewish control for the first time in 2600 years, and talk of rebuilding the great Temple, the most important sign of Jesus Christ's soon coming is before us... It is like the key piece of a jigsaw puzzle being found... For all those who trust in Jesus Christ, it is a time of electrifying excitement.<sup>30</sup>

Since the 1960's, I have been writing and saying that the single most important key to prophecies yet to be fulfilled involve rebuilding the Temple. Twenty-five years ago, the whole idea of Jews actually rebuilding their holy Temple seemed quaint-even far fetched. Today, nobody's laughing about the notion.<sup>31</sup>

Jews for Jesus also endorse and sell 'Ready to Rebuild: The Imminent Plan to Rebuild the Last Days Temple', by Thomas Ice and Randall Price. These dispensational writers advocate the rebuilding of the Jewish temple next to, if not in place of, the Dome of the Rock.<sup>32</sup> The book review, quoting John Walvoord, chancellor of Dallas Theological Seminary, also implies the State of Israel supports moves to rebuild the Temple.



Something is happening in Israel! For many years there has been speculation as to whether the Second Temple, destroyed in 70 AD, will ever be rebuilt - even though Scripture predicts it. Now you can read the startling evidence. The move is already underway. This fascinating, fast-moving overview of contemporary events shows why the Temple is significant in Bible prophecy and how, more than ever, Israel is ready to rebuild. "A masterpiece presenting all the various views with substantiating evidence... A mine of information for those concerned about prophecy... A solid basis for faith and what can actually be expected in regard to the rebuilding of the Temple... (it) is highly recommended." - John F. Walvoord<sup>33</sup>

## **2. The Temple of Dispensationalism**

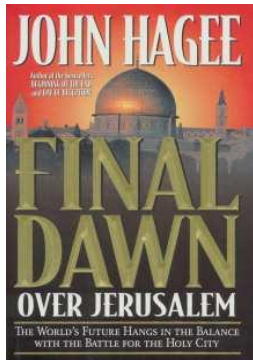
### **The Historical Origins of the Christian Zionist Temple Movement**

#### **2.1 The Premillennial Presuppositions of a Rebuilt Temple**

Of the three eschatological positions, amillennial, postmillennial and premillennial, it is the latter, with its belief in a literal and physical thousand year Messianic reign on earth, centred on Jerusalem, which

has sustained belief in a future Jewish Temple. While this view was held prior to 1948<sup>34</sup>, it was the founding of the State of Israel, and more especially, the Israeli capture of the Old City of Jerusalem in 1967, which became the catalyst for speculation on the imminent rebuilding of the Temple.<sup>35</sup> In the early 19th Century the dominant eschatological position among evangelicals was postmillennial, believing the Church would triumph over evil, progressively converting the world before the return of Jesus. Gradually the influence of Edward Irving's apocalypticism<sup>36</sup> and J. N. Darby's pessimistic dispensationalism<sup>37</sup>, brought about a revival in premillennial thinking to the point when by the mid 20th Century it had come to dominate evangelical and fundamentalist circles, virtually synonymous with dispensationalism.<sup>38</sup>

## 2.2 A Futurist Literal Hermeneutic



Speculation about the rebuilding of the Temple is largely the consequence of a futurist literal hermeneutic popularised in the early 19th Century by Edward Irving<sup>39</sup> and the Albury Circle meeting in Surrey,<sup>40</sup> later by John Nelson Darby and the Powerscourt Conferences in Ireland<sup>41</sup> and then most effectively by Cyrus Scofield in the United States through his Scofield Reference Bible.<sup>42</sup> It is based on the premise that prophecies made in the Old Testament which have not yet been fulfilled literally, word for word, must await future fulfilment. Similarly the futurizing of passages such as the Olivet Discourse in Matthew 24 require a rebuilt Temple for their fulfilment.<sup>43</sup> So, Scofield insisted,

Not one instance exists of a 'spiritual' or figurative fulfilment of prophecy... Jerusalem is always Jerusalem, Israel is always Israel, Zion is always Zion... Prophecies may never be spiritualised, but are always literal.<sup>44</sup>

One of Scofield's disciples, Lewis Sperry Chafer, who founded Dallas Theological Seminary in 1924, became his most articulate and influential exponent producing the first and definitive eight volume systematic theology of Dispensationalism based on Scofield's scheme.<sup>45</sup> Chafer defines the literal hermeneutic upon which dispensationalism and the Christian Zionist belief in a rebuilt Temple is based.

The outstanding characteristic of the dispensationalist is... That he believes every statement of the Bible and gives to it the plain, natural meaning its words imply.<sup>46</sup>

John Walvoord, Chancellor of Dallas Theological Seminary, summarises the position of premillennial dispensationalists who take the authors of the Bible "to mean what they say".

Orthodox Jews for many years have been praying daily for the rebuilding of the temple. In this expectation, they have had the support of premillennarians who interpret Scriptural prophecies as meaning what they say when they refer to a future temple in Jerusalem. The world as a whole, as well as the majority of the church, have tended to ignore this expectation as being too literal an interpretation of prophecy.<sup>47</sup>

Walvoord claims history has proved the premillennialist correct.

The fact that Israel is now in their ancient land organized as a nation, and the impressive recent events which have put the city of Jerusalem itself into the hands of Israel, have to a large extent revealed the premises and conclusions of both the amillennarians and postmillennarians to be in error.<sup>48</sup>



Walvoord's dogmatic presuppositions are readily questioned by those who hold differing eschatological views.<sup>49</sup>

### 2.3 The Dispensational Distinction between the Church and Israel

The literalist hermeneutic of dispensationalism leads them to distinguish between God's continuing purposes for the Jewish people from those of the Church.<sup>50</sup> The idea that the Jews are God's earthly people and the Church God's heavenly people was first argued by John Nelson Darby.<sup>51</sup> Charles Ryrie insists the sine qua non of Dispensationalism to be:

1. A dispensationalist keeps Israel and the Church distinct...
2. This distinction between Israel and the church is born out of a system of hermeneutics that is usually called literal interpretation...<sup>52</sup>

Scofield taught as a consequence that it was God's intention to restore the nation of Israel to Palestine, to rebuild the Temple, and re-institute the priesthood and sacrificial system.

According to the prophets, Israel, regathered from all nations, restored to her own land, and converted, is yet to have her greatest earthly exaltation and glory.<sup>53</sup>

Scofield even claimed that there will be a fourth millennium temple in Jerusalem.

In a sense all the temples (i.e. Solomon's; Ezra's; Herod's; that which will be used by the unbelieving Jews under the covenant with the Beast [Dan. 9.27; Mt. 24. 15; 2 Thes. 2. 3,4]; and Ezekiel's future kingdom temple [Ezk. 40-47.]), are treated as one 'house'-the 'house of the Lord,'<sup>54</sup>

The conviction held by Christian Zionists that the Jewish Temple must be rebuilt is therefore based upon a premillennial eschatology, a futurist literal hermeneutic and the dispensationalist distinction between Israel and the Church. These foundational presuppositions stand or fall together.<sup>55</sup>

## 3. The Temple of Prophecy

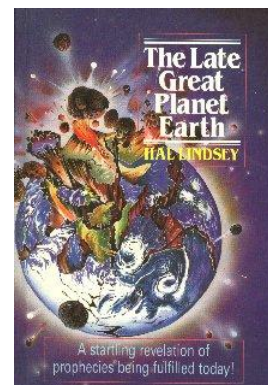
### The Biblical Basis for the Rebuilding of the Jewish Temple

The conviction that the Temple must be rebuilt is based on the assumption that certain Old Testament prophecies referring to the Temple have not yet been fulfilled and upon a few New Testament references which, when read using a futurist literal hermeneutic, imply the existence of a Jewish Temple immediately prior to the return of Christ.

#### 3.1 Unfulfilled Old Testament Prophecies

One of the most frequently quoted Old Testament passages by Christian Zionists is Daniel 9:24-27. The sanctuary appears to have already been destroyed in verse 26 yet sacrifices are brought to an end in verse 27 and then the 'abomination that causes desolation' desecrates the Temple. On the basis of a literal chronology in which it is necessary to place a gap of nearly 2000 years between the verses, Lindsey confidently argues,

This prophecy speaks of sacrifice and offerings which demand that the Jews rebuild the Temple for the third time upon its original site. At that point, Judaism and Islam will be placed on an inevitable course of war over the site, a war that will start Armageddon... any move toward that direction is a crucial clue to what hour it is on God's prophetic timetable.<sup>56</sup>



David Brickner, International Director of Jews for Jesus, reaches the same conclusion.

Obviously the Temple has been rebuilt because Daniel tells us this ruler puts an end to sacrifice and sets up some kind of abomination (a loathsome horror that would be anathema to Jewish worship) right inside the Temple in Jerusalem. Ultimately this ruler is destroyed in a final conflagration of enormous proportion.<sup>57</sup>

Kenneth Barker posits five rather questionable reasons for the gap between the 69th and 70th week. His two strongest arguments are based on literalist dispensational presuppositions which evaporate if they are themselves questioned.

The seventieth seven could not have been fulfilled because the results of the Messiah's work outlined in v. 24 have not yet been realized... All the remaining unfulfilled prophecies become unintelligible unless the present church age is regarded as a distinct period of time of unknown duration in God's prophetic program.<sup>58</sup>

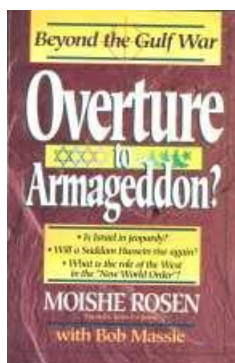
There is nothing, however, in the text of Daniel 9 that requires a futurist scenario, suggests a gap between the 69th and 70th weeks, or predicts the rebuilding of a Jewish Temple. Gary DeMar points out,

The idea of separation and the placement of an indeterminable gap between the two sets of weeks is one of the most unnatural and nonliteral interpretations of Scripture found in any eschatological system.<sup>59</sup>

Other commentators regard attempts to date Daniel's 'weeks' are essentially flawed because they fail to read this prophecy as symbolic 'chronography' rather than literal chronology. So, for example, Goldingay claims Daniel is using,

...a stylized scheme of history used to interpret historical data rather than arising from them, comparable to cosmology, arithmology, and genealogy...<sup>60</sup>

Others also see these verses as having been fulfilled theologically in Jesus who by his death put an end to sacrifices as well as the Temple.<sup>61</sup>



Moishe Rosen, however, following a futurist literal reading, claims Ezekiel 43 also refers to contemporary events leading to the imminent rebuilding of the Temple.

...at some point in these stressful days, the ancient Jewish Temple will be rebuilt on the holy Temple Mount in Jerusalem... Prophecy foretells the rebuilding of the Jewish Temple and the reinstitution of the sacrifices prescribed in the law of Moses. In a vision of the future Temple, Ezekiel received this word... Some way, somehow, the Temple will be rebuilt, in spite of the fact that two Arab shrines now stand on the only site on earth where this Temple may stand.<sup>62</sup>

Such a conviction is based on the imposition of dispensational presuppositions and a futurist hermeneutic rather than by exegeting what the text actually says. The same futurist assumptions are used to interpret references to the destruction of the Temple found in the New Testament.

### 3.2 The New Testament Fulfilment

The most important New Testament passage used to support the belief in the rebuilding of the Jewish Temple is Matthew 24:1-2 and 15. While Dispensationalists agree that in the first two verses Jesus is warning of the imminent destruction of Jerusalem,<sup>63</sup>

they claim that by verse 15 Jesus is describing the desecration of another future Temple which has yet to be built. This futurist interpretation of Matthew 24, like that of Daniel 9:24-27 requires a gap of some 2000 years between these verses. So, for example, John Walvoord argues,

This prediction obviously could not refer to A.D. 70 as it is an event immediately preceding the second advent of Christ described, in Matthew 24:27<sup>63</sup>. The prediction, however, gives us the clue concerning the future Temple. The abomination of desolation has reference to a future event paralleling to some extent "the abomination that maketh desolate" of Daniel 11:31 fulfilled in the desolation of the Temple in the second century B.C. by Antiochus Epiphanes which sparked the Maccabean revolt.

<sup>64</sup>

Hal Lindsey takes a similar but rather more dogmatic view.

Of course, for Temple rites to be stopped in the last days, we know they must be restarted. The words of Jesus Himself in Matthew 24:15 require that a new holy place be built and a complete sacrificial system re-instituted. And since only a consecrated temple can be defiled, this prophecy shows that the physical Temple must not only be rebuilt, but a functioning priesthood must begin practising once again.<sup>65</sup>

Lindsey is not averse to adding words to the text of scripture where they help to reinforce his interpretation.



Therefore when you see the Abomination which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place [of the rebuilt temple] (let the reader understand), then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains...<sup>66</sup>

While Lindsey and Walvoord believe Jesus was predicting a future desecration of a rebuilt temple, non-dispensationalist commentators suggest his words were fulfilled in the events leading up to the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. when Jewish Zealots desecrated the temple using it as a fortress against the Romans.<sup>67</sup>

Eusebius, the 4th Century church historian, for example, refers to the eyewitness accounts of Josephus to show how these predictions were understood as having already been fulfilled by then.<sup>68</sup>

...what terrible, and worse than terrible, sights were seen by those who had fled to Jerusalem itself as to a most sure metropolis; the character of the whole war, and each of its happenings in detail; how at the end the abomination of desolation announced by the prophets took its stand in the once far-famed temple of God when it endured its utter ruin and final destruction by fire [all these things] he who wishes may gather with exactitude from the history written by Josephus.<sup>69</sup>

Writing in the Jewish Wars, Josephus links Daniel's prophecy to the desecration of the Temple and destruction of Jerusalem in AD 66-70.

And indeed it so came to pass, that our nation suffered these things under Antiochus Epiphanes, according to Daniel's vision. And what he wrote many years before they came to pass. In the very same manner Daniel also wrote concerning the Roman government, and that our country should be made desolate by them.<sup>70</sup>

Josephus also specifically associates the desecration of the Temple with the activities of Jewish Zealots who, between November 67 and the Spring of 68 AD., used the Temple as a military fortress, murdered Jewish opponents within it and even entered the Holiest of Holies. They also appointed their own high priests who were 'undeserving, ignoble and vile persons' including an 'ignoramus' called Phannias.<sup>71</sup>

For there was a certain ancient oracle of those men, that the city should then be taken and the sanctuary burned, by right of war, when a rebellion should invade the Jews, and their own hand should pollute the temple of God. Now while these zealots did not [quite] disbelieve these predictions, they made themselves the instruments of their own accomplishments.<sup>72</sup>

These men made the Temple of God a stronghold for them, and a place where they might resort, in order to avoid the troubles they feared from the people; the sanctuary was now become a refuge, and a shop of tyranny.<sup>73</sup>

Two of the boldest of them fell upon Zacharias in the middle of the temple and killed him; and as he fell down dead, they bantered him... They also threw him down from the temple immediately into the valley beneath it.<sup>74</sup>

The best esteemed also of the high priests... Ananus stood in the midst of them, and casting his eyes frequently at the temple, and having a flood of tears in his eyes, he said, "Certainly it had been good for me to die before I had seen the house of God full of so many abominations, or these sacred places, that ought not to be trodden upon at random, filled with the feet of these blood-shedding villains"; ...called Jews, do walk about in the midst of the holy places, at the very time when their hands are still warm with the slaughter of their own countrymen.<sup>75</sup>

Believing God would intervene and deliver them by force, the Zealots invited the Idumean army of some 20,000 troops to come and help defend Jerusalem from the Romans. Josephus tells us that instead, the Idumeans took advantage of the city and plundered it, filling the Temple with the blood of those slaughtered including the family of the High Priest Ananus.

...nor did the Idumeans spare anybody... And now the outer temple was all of it overflowed with blood; and that day, as it came on, they saw eight thousand five hundred dead bodies there.<sup>76</sup>

Josephus regarded the death of Ananus as the beginning of the destruction of Jerusalem.<sup>77</sup>

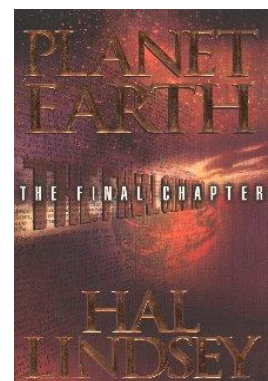
It is probable therefore that Jewish Christians also recognised in the murder of Ananus and the appointment of apostate high priests like Phannias, the sacrilege Jesus had warned of in Matthew 24, and so fled Jerusalem for the mountains of Pella on the other side of the Jordan.<sup>78</sup>

The Temple was subsequently defiled yet again by the invading Roman army. The Roman soldiers worshipped the eagle on their ensigns and placed them in the Temple where they offered sacrifices to their pagan gods. Josephus describes the scene.

And now the Romans, upon the flight of the rebellious into the city, and upon the burning of the holy house itself, and of all the buildings around it, brought their ensigns to the temple and set them near to its eastern gate; and there did they offer sacrifices to them, and there they did make Titus emperor with the greatest acclamations of joy.<sup>79</sup>

As a 1st Century eyewitness and historian, Josephus shows how the Temple was desecrated on numerous occasions first by Jewish Zealots, then by the marauding Idumeans and finally by Titus and his Roman army. The irony is that Josephus also records that Titus lamented how the Jews themselves destroyed their own temple by setting it on fire.<sup>80</sup>

When I came near to your temple, I again departed from the laws of war, and exhorted you to spare your own sanctuary, and to preserve your holy house to yourselves. I allowed you a quiet exit out of it, and security for your preservation... Yet have you still despised every one of my proposals, and have set fire to your holy house with your own hands.<sup>81</sup>





While the Idumeans and Romans did subsequently desecrate the Temple, it was first and foremost the Jews who, having rejected Jesus and declared Caesar to be their only king, appointed apostate high priests and used the Temple as a fortress against Rome, who ultimately fulfilled the words of Jesus and made Temple worship idolatrous.<sup>82</sup>

John Calvin reached this conclusion believing God,

...deserted his Temple, because it was only founded for a time, and was but a shadow, until the Jews so completely violated the whole covenant that no sanctity remained in either the Temple, the nation, or the land itself.<sup>83</sup>

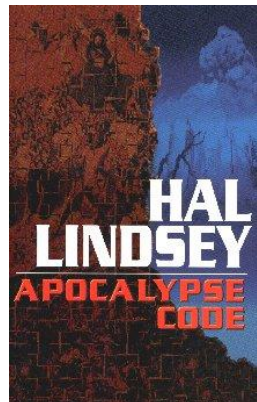
Whether at the hands of Jews or pagans, with the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70 the abomination had indeed brought desolation. Dispensationalists, however, reject the contemporary historical evidence, substantiating a 1st Century fulfilment, preferring instead to interpret Matthew 24 as prophecy awaiting future fulfilment. So when Jesus promised these events would be witnessed by 'this generation'<sup>84</sup>

Lindsey understands the word 'this' to refer to his own generation who had witnessed the founding of the State of Israel in 1948 and capture of the Old City of Jerusalem in 1967.<sup>85</sup>

So the rebuilding of the Temple is significant not only because of the potential firestorm it will create between Jews and Muslims in the Middle East. It is also a critical development in the entire prophetic scenario. The Bible makes it clear that in the last days the Antichrist will establish his reign in the Temple of Jerusalem. Therefore, the Temple must and will be rebuilt.<sup>86</sup>

A plain reading of the text, however, indicates that Jesus spoke with urgency intending his hearers to recognise the signs of the times and escape the imminent death and destruction about to befall Jerusalem. Walvoord, nevertheless, claims that his reading of 2 Thessalonians 2:1-4 confirms a futurist dispensational reading.

In this passage prediction is made that the future man of sin "who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped" assumes the role of deity, "so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God" (2 Thess 2:4). Using this passage as an interpretation of the prediction of Daniel 9:27 and Matthew 24:15, it may be concluded that following the desecration of the Jewish temple and its sacrifices the future man of sin identified by many as "the prince that shall come" (Dan 9:26) will become an object of worship.<sup>87</sup>



Further evidence for the rebuilding of the Temple is allegedly found in the instructions given to the Apostle John to measure the Temple in Revelation 11:1-2. The Apostle John wrote the Book of Revelation about the year A.D. 95. This means that the Temple... was non-existent for the twenty-five years preceding John's writing... What Temple, then, was John referring to? There can be only one answer - a yet-to-be-built structure!<sup>88</sup>

It is on the basis of these passages and a literalist logic that dispensationalists believe the Bible promises a future Temple will be built in order to be desecrated and destroyed once again.

With the Jewish nation reborn in the land of Palestine, ancient Jerusalem once again under total Jewish control for the first time in 2600 years, and talk of rebuilding the great Temple, the most important sign of Jesus Christ's soon coming is before us... It is like the key piece of a jigsaw puzzle being found... For all those who trust in Jesus Christ, it is a time of electrifying excitement.<sup>89</sup>

A study of the usage of the word Temple in the New Testament reveals 112 references. Of 66 verses where the word occurs in the Gospels, 58 refer to Herod's Temple. In the other eight Jesus compares himself to the Temple, its destruction and his own resurrection.<sup>90</sup>

The word is also used 25 times in Acts and always of Herod's Temple or a pagan shrine. In the Epistles the word occurs in nine verses. In three it refers to the existing Jewish Temple and once to a pagan shrine.<sup>91</sup>

In the Book of Revelation the word occurs a further 12 times and in each case refers specifically to the heavenly Temple or to the Lord God Himself<sup>92</sup>

On the six remaining occasions when the word is used in the Epistles it describes the individual Christian and corporately the Church as the Body of Christ.<sup>93</sup>

Jesus anticipated this in his conversation with the Samaritan women in John 4. Worship, Jesus predicted, would soon no longer be confined to the Temple in Jerusalem but become universal 'in spirit and truth'.<sup>94</sup>

While Jesus warned of the destruction of the Temple, and was known to have said so by his critics, he never promised that it would ever be rebuilt.<sup>95</sup>

In Hebrews, the author describes the offering of sacrifices between the death of Christ and the destruction of the Temple as an 'illustration' of, and 'copies' of, heavenly realities, a 'reminder of sins' but unable, unlike the finished work of Christ, to take sin away.<sup>96</sup>

Peter uses the same terminology to describe the way Christians are being made into the new house of God,<sup>97</sup> in which Jesus is the 'precious cornerstone'.<sup>98</sup>

There is therefore not a single verse in the New Testament which promises the Jewish Temple would be rebuilt or that a 2000 year 'parenthesis' should be placed between references to its desecration and destruction. Christian Zionists consistently ignore the way in which the Temple is invested with new meaning in the New Testament as a 'type' for Jesus Christ and his Church<sup>99</sup>

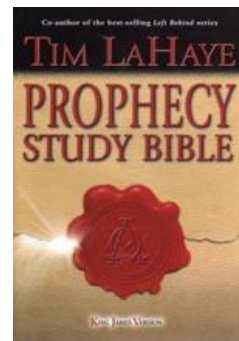
Instead they advocate a return to the very practices made redundant by the work of Jesus Christ.

#### **4. The Temple of Sacrifice**

##### **The Theological Purpose for the Rebuilding of the Jewish Temple**

The rebuilding of the Temple is meaningless without at the same time the reintroduction of the Mosaic sacrificial system. Based on his reading of Daniel, Walvoord, for example, claims,

Judging by Scriptures, this is precisely what they will do as it would be impossible to cause sacrifices to cease if they were not already in operation. The usual method of dismissing this as something which occurred in A.D. 70 does not provide a reasonable explanation of the text nor account for the fact that the second coming of Christ occurs immediately thereafter.<sup>100</sup>



Scofield in his Reference Bible claimed, however, that the sacrifices mentioned in Ezekiel 43:19, would only be a 'memorial' offering.

Doubtless these offerings will be memorial, looking back to the cross, as the offerings under the old covenant were anticipatory, looking forward to the cross. In neither case have animal sacrifices power to put away sin (Heb. 10.4; Rom. 3.25).<sup>101</sup>

For one so committed to 'literalism' such an interpretation is unconvincing for the verse explicitly refers to the sacrifice of a 'young bullock as a sin offering.' If Scofield appears to fudge the issue, the note on

the same verse in the New Scofield Reference Bible goes even further, undermining the entire hermeneutical premise of Dispensationalism.

The reference to sacrifices is not to be taken literally, in view of the putting away of such offerings, but is rather to be regarded as a presentation of the worship of redeemed Israel, in her own land and in the millennial Temple, using the terms with which the Jews were familiar in Ezekiel's day.<sup>[102](#)</sup>

If this particular reference to sacrifice need not be taken literally then the whole dispensationalist edifice collapses, flawed by its internal inconsistency.<sup>[103](#)</sup>

It is impossible to confuse or equate the sacrifice of a young bullock with a memorial offering which consisted of grain and oil.<sup>[104](#)</sup>

The immediate context for Ezekiel's vision of a rebuilt Temple is the promised return of the Jews from Babylonian exile, not some long distant eschatological event. This would have been utterly meaningless to the exiles longing to return to Israel. Furthermore, if Ezekiel was referring to some future millennial age, Jesus Christ could not serve in such a Temple because he was not of the tribe of Levi.<sup>[105](#)</sup>

However, even if he could do so it would still be incongruous for Jesus to offer animal sacrifices when he had replaced them by the shedding his own blood.<sup>[106](#)</sup>

Such an interpretation undermines the New Testament emphasis on the finished and sufficient work of Christ.<sup>[107](#)</sup>

Nevertheless, Zahava Glaser, of Jews for Jesus, describes how over the past 1900 years the liturgy used in the synagogue has kept the memory of the Temple alive in Jewish hearts and prayers. He therefore insists, 'when God instituted the sacrificial system, it was instituted for all time.'

What flour is to bread, the sacrificial system is to the religion revealed in the Jewish Scriptures. It is not a garnish. It is not a flavoring. It is the very substance out of which the Jewish religion was constructed. We can forever design our own substitutes, but they cannot satisfy our yearnings the way God's own provision can. Though some rabbis might minimize the revealed system of worship and its requirements, can the individual Jew neglect what God says? Can there be a "proper" Judaism without a priesthood, an altar, a sacrifice and a place on earth where God meets the individual?<sup>[108](#)</sup>

Glaser seems to be representative of those who hold that the Temple will be rebuilt because the Jews have a separate covenant relationship with God, apart from the Church. He therefore does not appear to see the high priesthood of Jesus as in any sense necessarily replacing or superseding the Jewish religious system.

By insisting on such an arbitrary and dualistic separation between God's purposes for the Jews and those of the Church, Christian Zionists are promoting Old Testament 'shadows' alongside their New Testament 'substance'.<sup>[109](#)</sup>

In doing so they are seeking to revive what is now obsolete. Turning the clock back in redemptive history<sup>[110](#)</sup> they are Judaizing the Christian faith.<sup>[111](#)</sup>

If religious Jews do indeed rebuild their Temple and re-institute sacrifices it will only confirm their rejection of the atoning work of Jesus Christ. For Christians to support them in the belief that future sacrifices may atone for sin is apostasy.<sup>[112](#)</sup>

This is because the movement in the progressive revelation of Scripture is always from the lesser to the greater. It is never reversed. The New Testament repeatedly sees such Old Testament concepts as the Temple, High Priest and sacrifice as 'types' pointing to and fulfilled in Jesus Christ.<sup>[113](#)</sup>

Typology in Scripture never typifies itself, nor is it ever greater than that which it typifies.<sup>[114](#)</sup>

Christians who therefore advocate the rebuilding of the Temple are regressing into a pre-Christian sacrificial system, superseded and annulled by the finished work of Jesus Christ. DeMar writes,

With the true lamb slain, the earthly temple could no longer operate as a place of sacrifice. The action of the high priest, "standing in the holy place" (24:15), continuing to offer sacrifices in the temple, was an abomination, a rejection of the work of Christ.<sup>[115](#)</sup>

The Temple was but a temporary edifice, 'a copy and a shadow of what is in heaven,'<sup>[116](#)</sup> anticipating the day when God would dwell with people of all nations throughout the world because of the atoning work of the true Temple, Jesus Christ.<sup>[117](#)</sup>

J.C. Ryle, writing in 1856, challenged those of his day who anticipated the rebuilding of the Temple based on Matthew 24 in like manner.

It surprises some to find so much importance attached to the taking of Jerusalem: they would rather regard the whole chapter as unfulfilled. Such persons forget that Jerusalem and the temple were the heart of the old Jewish dispensation: when they were destroyed, the old Mosaic system came to an end. The daily sacrifice, the yearly feasts, the altar, the holiest of holies, the priesthood, were all essential parts of revealed religion, till Christ came, - but no longer. When he died upon the cross, their work was done: they were dead, and it only remained that they should be buried. But it was not fitting that this thing should be done quietly. The ending of a dispensation given with so much solemnity at mount Sinai, might well be expected to be marked with peculiar solemnity; the destruction of the holy temple, where so many old saints had seen "shadows of good things to come," might well be expected to form a subject of prophecy: and so it was. The Lord Jesus specially predicts the desolation of "the holy place." The great High Priest describes the end of the dispensation which had been a schoolmaster to bring men to Himself.<sup>[118](#)</sup>

Charles Spurgeon put it rather more succinctly.

Judaism had become a "carcase", dead and corrupt; fair prey for the vultures or carrion-kites of Rome.<sup>[119](#)</sup>

Nevertheless, the weight of argument in favour of a historical or preterist interpretation has not hindered Christian Zionists from supporting and funding the work to rebuild the Jewish Temple.

## **5. The Temple of Destiny**

### **The Practical Issues of Rebuilding the Jewish Temple**

#### **5.1 When - the timing for the rebuilding**

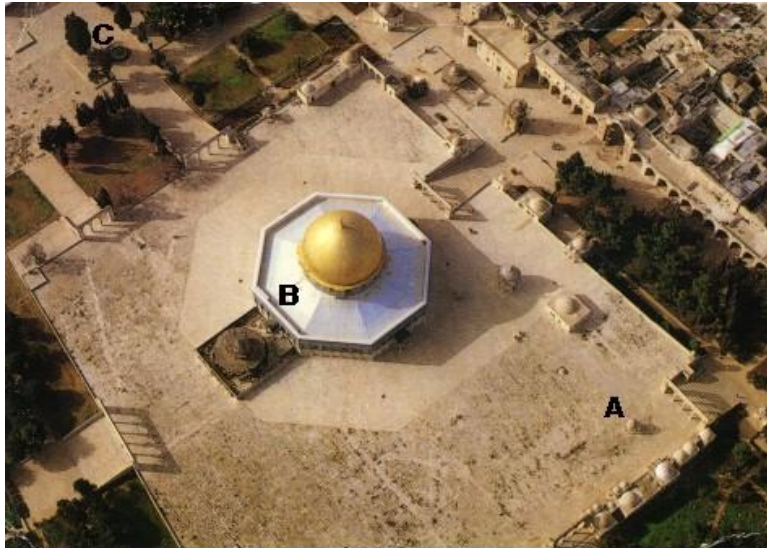
Brickner asserts that the preparations for rebuilding the Temple began in 1967 with the capture of the Old City of Jerusalem.<sup>[120](#)</sup>

Lindsey is equally confident. 'Right now, as you read this, preparations are being made to rebuild the Third Temple.'<sup>[121](#)</sup>

#### **5.2 Where - the location of the First and Second Temples**

One of the unresolved difficulties faced by those who favour the rebuilding of the Jewish Temple is deciding where to put it. It is critical that any future Temple be built on the same site as the Temples of Solomon, Zerubbabel and Herod. There appears to have been some continuity with each being built with its Holy of Holies enclosing the same protrusion of Mount Moriah, also known as Even ha-Shetiyah (The Foundation Stone). There are three main theories advocated by historians and archaeologists.





One theory **C** suggested by Father Bellarmino Bagatti, a Franciscan scholar and supported by Tel Aviv architect Tuvia Sagiv, is based on early archaeological findings, Josephus and topographical elevations. They argue that the Temple was situated at the southwest corner of the platform near to where the Al Aqsa mosque is today.<sup>[122](#)</sup>

Based on infrared thermographic scans of the Temple Mount they claim that underground structures may prove the presence of vaults and

Hadrian's temple to Jupiter in this area to the south of the Dome of the Rock. If the Roman's built their pagan temple over the destroyed Jewish Temple, as was often their custom, this may indicate that the Temple was originally at this location.

A more popular theory **A** is offered by Asher Kaufmann, a physicist at the Hebrew University.<sup>[123](#)</sup>

His research relies on details given in the Mishna Tractate known as Middot (Measurements) and computations based on the angles of line-of-sight between the Mount of Olives where the red heifer was allegedly sacrificed and the eastern court of the Temple where the Great Altar stood. Kaufman claims that based on these calculations the Temple was built on the north-western corner of the Temple platform about 330 feet away from the Dome of the Rock. He believes that a small cupola at this site, known in Arabic as the Dome of the Tablets, was the Foundation Stone within the Holy of Holies.<sup>[124](#)</sup>

The most commonly held theory **B**, with both traditional support and the consensus among Israeli archaeologists today, is that the Temple stood on the site of the Dome of the Rock. Research by Benjamin Mazar, Leen Ritmeyer, who served as chief architect for the Western wall excavations, as well as Dan Bahat, professor of archaeology at Bar Ilan University, conclude that based on physical evidence remaining on the site, both the First and Second Temples were situated under the Dome of the Rock.<sup>[125](#)</sup>

Ritmeyer claims to have found within the Muslim Dome of the Rock, the foundation trenches and the walls of the Holy of Holies, and place where the Ark of the Covenant rested.<sup>[126](#)</sup>

Kaufmann's northern site theory is increasingly favoured by Christian Zionists as it does not require the destruction of the Dome of the Rock.

It is fascinating observing how people like Lindsey have altered their views over time. In the 1970's, for example, Lindsey insisted the Jewish Temple would have to be built in place of the Dome of the Rock.

There remains but one more event to completely set the stage for Israel's part in the last great act of her historical drama. This is to rebuild the ancient Temple of worship upon its old site... There is one major problem barring the construction of a third Temple. That obstacle is the second holiest place of the Muslim faith, the Dome of the Rock. This is believed to be built squarely in the middle of the old temple site. Obstacle or no obstacle, it is certain that the Temple will be rebuilt. Prophecy demands it.<sup>[127](#)</sup>

Lindsey even appeared to know the exact location of the former structure.

Archaeologists have uncovered a pillar from Solomon's porch as the first major find from the Herodian Temple. From its location in relation to the Wailing Wall they have now ascertained

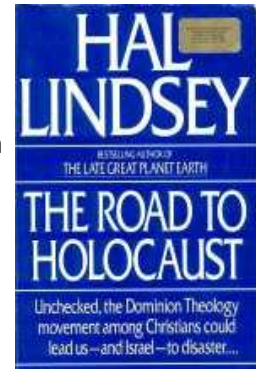
where the ancient Holy of Holies in the Temple was located. Imagine my emotions as I stood under a sign at the Wall which read in Hebrew: 'Holy of Holies, 10 Metres,' with an arrow pointing towards a spot thirty feet behind the existing Wall in the direction of the Dome of the Rock!<sup>[128](#)</sup>

By 1983 Lindsey had changed his mind. Favours Kaufman's position Lindsey now claimed,

I also believe that this discovery has accelerated the countdown to the events that will bring the Messiah Jesus back to earth. The reason for this belief is that the predicted Third Temple can now be built without disturbing the Dome of the Rock. ...the Temple and its immediate guard wall could be rebuilt and still be twenty-six meters away from the Dome of the Rock.<sup>[129](#)</sup>

Having discovered the true site of the Herodian Temple, Lindsey proceeded to find scriptural verification for this new location.

Revelation chapter 11 indicates this very situation: 'I was given a reed like a measuring rod and told, 'Go and measure the temple of God and the altar, and count the worshippers there. But exclude the outer court; do not measure it, because it has been given to the Gentiles. They will trample on the holy city for 42 months.'" (Revelation 11:1,2 NIV). The outer court, which includes the area where the Dome of the Rock is situated, was given to the Gentiles. So this prophecy accurately reflects the situation that is present today... All of these things are tremendously exciting to those who know Bible prophecy. We are literally in the very last days of the Church Age. The Temple will be rebuilt soon!<sup>[130](#)</sup>



In 1994, Lindsey heightened speculation still further by insisting,

I remember my whole body tingling with excitement when I measured the distances on the Temple platform and realized that God had left out the outer court because it allowed for the Gentile temple to remain alongside the rebuilt Jewish Temple during the Tribulation. Folks, the footsteps of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, can already be heard as He approaches the doors of heaven to return. The Temple is the last sign that needs to fall into place before events irreversibly speed toward the return of Jesus.<sup>[131](#)</sup>

Brickner also supports the claims made by Randall Price that the Jewish Temple could actually be rebuilt alongside the Dome of the Rock.

...there may be a solution for that barrier to rebuilding. You see, recently some archaeologists have concluded that the actual location of the foundation stone upon which the ark rested is north of the Dome of the Rock. If true, it is theoretically possible to rebuild the Temple without having to tear down the Muslim holy sites. Nevertheless, because of the proximity to the mosques, it remains a sensitive issue to say the least.<sup>[132](#)</sup>

Most orthodox Jews, however, remain convinced that the Dome of the Rock must be removed before the Temple can be rebuilt,<sup>[133](#)</sup>

although Gershon Salomon claims the Dome of the Rock was built by Caliph Abd el-Malik in 691 AD as a Jewish house of prayer, as he was allegedly a Jewish proselyte.<sup>[134](#)</sup>

### **5.3 How - the Means for Rebuilding**

Chaim Richman, a spokesman for the Temple Institute, claims detailed blueprints for the Third Temple have existed for several years. Other buildings associated with the a future Temple are planned or have already been built. Rabbi Shlomo Goren, for example, has supervised the construction of a replica of the 70-seat Supreme Court building for the new Sanhedrin, adjacent to the Temple Mount in the Jewish

Quarter. The legal stipulations which the Sanhedrin will use to supervise Temple practices are also being published. The first volume was printed in 1986 by the Research Center for Jewish Thought under the direction of Yoel Lerner.<sup>135</sup>

A member of Meir Kahane Kach movement, Lerner was arrested and convicted in 1982 for attempting to sabotage the Dome of the Rock for which he was sentenced to two and a half years in prison.<sup>136</sup>

Previously he had served a three year sentence for plotting to overthrow the Israeli government and establish a state based upon religious law.

### **5.3.1 Training the Priests - The Temple Mount Yeshivas**

According to rabbinic tradition, although the genealogical records of the Temple were lost in 70 AD when the Jews were dispersed, Levites were forbidden to change their family names when other Jews assimilated into the Roman Empire. The use of modern DNA tests has also been used to confirm the authenticity of men suitable to train as Temple priests. Rabbi Nachman Kahane, head of the Young Israel Synagogue together with the Institute for Talmudic Commentaries maintains a computer database of all known priestly candidates in Israel. Other Orthodox organizations in Israel are helping to educate them. The Yeshiva founded by Motti Dan Hacohen, known as Ateret Cohanim, for example, is preparing students to perform priestly service. Its sister organization Atara Leyoshna, has aggressively acquired or illegally occupied many Arab properties in the Muslim Quarter near the Temple Mount in order to establish and consolidate a Jewish presence in preparation for rebuilding the Temple.<sup>137</sup>

Brickner cites the following advert placed in Ha'aretz in March 1998.

Children wanted for future Temple service. Ultra-orthodox Jewish sect is searching for parents willing to hand over newborn sons to be raised in isolation and purity in preparation for the rebuilding of the biblical temple in Jerusalem. Only members of the Jewish priestly caste, the Kohanim need apply.<sup>138</sup>

Brickner appears representative of those Christian Zionists who are convinced that ultra-orthodox groups will fulfill the vision of a fully functioning Jewish Temple.

### **5.3.2 Consecrating the Priests - Breeding the Red Heifers**



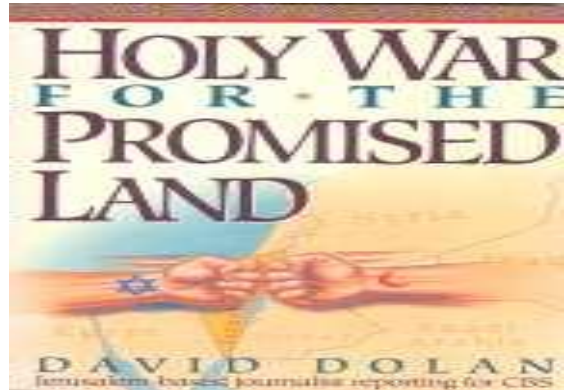
The dilemma facing prospective Temple priests is how to gain ritual purity in order to begin serving in a future Temple. According to the Book of Numbers, the ashes of a pure unblemished red heifer, itself previously offered by a ritually pure priest, must be mixed with water and sprinkled on both them and the Temple furniture. With the destruction of the Temple in 70 AD the ashes used in the ceremony were lost and the Jews of the Diaspora have since therefore been perpetually unclean. The search for the ashes of the last red heifer have so far proved unsuccessful. In 1998, however, Clyde Lott, a Mississippi rancher, formed Canaan Land Restoration of Israel, Inc. for the purpose of raising livestock suitable for Temple sacrifice.<sup>139</sup>

Shortly after this Rev. Lott (who is also a cattleman by trade) came to possess a red heifer that met all the biblical qualifications of Numbers chapter 19. Since that historic time in, November 11, 1994 God has miraculously unveiled His divine plan for the restoration of Israel, to the Church. The Holy Ghost has worked during this time to reveal to Apostolic ministers and laymen the need to unify their efforts in order to see this project move forward, both in the Spirit and in the natural. August 11, 1998 Israel is expecting to receive from Canaan Land Restoration, 500 head of bred, registered Red Angus Heifers.<sup>140</sup> According to Newsweek, in 1997, the first red heifer for 2000 years was born at the kibbutz Kfar Hassidim near Haifa.

Her name is Melody, and she whiles away her oblivious to controversy that surrounds her. Some would like to put a bullet in her head. Others want to burn her to cinders. But the greatest troubles Melody knows are the flies that swarm about her pen. Melody, a red heifer, born on an ordinary farm in northern Israel last year. But to observant Jews, there is nothing ordinary about her. A couple of millennia ago, in the era of the first and second Jewish Kingdoms, the ashes of a red heifer, butchered in her third year, were mixed with water and used to purify Jews before they could approach the Holy Temple on Jerusalem's Temple Mount.<sup>141</sup>

There was, however, some debate concerning Melody's purity due to the appearance of several white hairs. Nevertheless, Randall Price claims, other qualified red heifers have been secured from Clyde Lott. These have already been approved by Israeli authorities for import and are now awaiting transport to Israel.

Because the Jewish sage Maimonides taught that there had been nine red heifers between the beginning of the Tabernacle and the end of the Second Temple, and that when the tenth arrived it would be prepared by the Messianic King, a special urgency is attached to this recovery by leaders of the Temple Institute, such as Rabbi Chaim Richman.<sup>142</sup>



The cost of the work of rebuilding the Temple, the training of its future priests and furnishings is being funded, in large measure, by Christian Zionists as well as Jewish supporters.

### 5.3.3 Funding the Work - The Temple Treasury

The International Christian Embassy as well as mega-churches such as Chuck Smith's Calvary Chapel in Costa Mesa in California have been associated with the funding of the Jerusalem Temple Foundation (JTF) founded by a Jewish terrorist, Stanley Goldfoot and several leading American evangelicals.<sup>143</sup>

Terry Reisenhoover is the chairman and Goldfoot its international secretary. According to the Israeli newspaper Davar, as a member of the Stern Gang and also Irgun, Goldfoot was responsible for planting the bomb at the King David Hotel in Jerusalem on 22nd July 1946 which killed 100 British soldiers and officials.<sup>144</sup> In 1948 he was also convicted and jailed by an Israeli court for the murder of UN envoy Count Bernadotte.<sup>145</sup> Goldfoot has subsequently been influential in raising large sums of money, allegedly up to \$100 million a year<sup>146</sup>, for the JTF through American Christian TV and Radio stations and evangelical churches. Although van der Hoeven has denied direct involvement in efforts to see the Jewish Temple rebuilt, he has admitted that, "...when supporters volunteer to give money for building a temple, he directs them to Goldfoot." Pat Robertson's Christian Broadcasting Network has also assisted in fund raising for Gershon Salomon's Temple Mount Faithful.<sup>147</sup>



## 6. The Temple of Armageddon

### The Political Consequences of Rebuilding the Jewish Temple

The religious aspirations of Jewish and Christian Zionists working toward the rebuilding of the Jewish Temple clearly have political ramifications which threaten to destabilise the entire Middle East.<sup>148</sup>

However, apparently unaware of Muslim sensitivities, Lindsey naively suggests that a Jewish Temple could be built alongside the Muslim shrine and become 'the greatest tourist attraction in the world'.<sup>149</sup>



But let's think even more practically. Not only would the Temple become a unifying force for Israel's diverse and pluralistic society, it would also, without doubt, become the greatest tourist attraction in the world. Its basic economics. Imagine what a new Temple would do for the Israeli economy, which relies so heavily on tourism. The Temple would also serve to attract more Jews from all over the world-and... The Bible tells us that eventually all of the dispersed will return to their homeland. The Temple would serve as a kind of spiritual magnet. This, too, would fit into the prophetic scenario, which indicates that Israel is destined to play a major role in the world and experience vast wealth, power and prestige in the last days.<sup>150</sup>

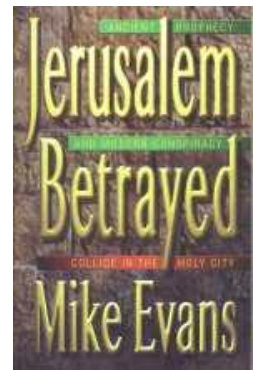
In his earlier writings Lindsey was rather less optimistic but probably more accurate.

The dispute to trigger the war of Armageddon will arise between the Arabs and Israelis over the Temple Mount and Old Jerusalem (Zechariah 12:2-3), the most contested and strategic piece of real estate in the world. Even now we are witnessing the escalation of that conflict.<sup>151</sup>

### 6.1 Support for the Jewish State

Christian Zionists tend to find their solidarity with the religious right-wing of Israeli society. For example, the Israeli Prime Minister has spoken at every one of the International Christian Zionist Congresses held annually in Jerusalem since 1980. Brickner is typical in lamenting the fact that ten days after Moshe Dyan captured the Old City in 1967, he returned the Temple Mount area to the Islamic authorities.

Israel's secular military leaders had no commitment to rebuilding the Temple. To them it was a relic of the past. To them, the Temple Mount represented potential conflict with Islam, more a political liability than anything else. Many Jews today feel quite different about that "little" piece of real estate.<sup>152</sup>



In an open letter to Benjamin Netanyahu, then Israel's ambassador to the United Nations, the International Christian Embassy affirmed its commitment that Jews be able to worship again on the Temple Mount.

The International Christian Embassy Jerusalem fervently hopes and prays that the day will soon come that the Temple Mount-or as the Bible calls it, the Mountain of the Lord-will no longer be a reason for religious divisiveness, but a place where all mankind will unite in worship to God according to His declared purposes. The Bible foresees the day when all nations will flow to the Mountain of the Lord irrespective of race or colour, and says that: 'His house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations.'<sup>153</sup>

Van der Hoeven, former director of the ICEJ, quotes from the speech made by Teddy Kollek, then mayor of Jerusalem, at the 1985 Christian Zionist Feast of Tabernacles celebration. Behind him was a futuristic painting of Jerusalem showing a rebuilt Jewish Temple.

Thank you for being here, for coming here faithfully, every year. Your faith gives us strength... I am glad I am speaking here against the background of this beautiful painting of Jerusalem. It is not yet the Jerusalem of today. If you look properly, you will see that the Temple, the Holy of Holies, has been restored!.. Our return is the first sign that the city will be existing again as it is in this painting!<sup>154</sup>

Christian Zionists are consistent in supporting and defending Israel from criticism whether political or religious equating anti-Zionism with anti-Semitism.<sup>155</sup>

## 6.2 Support for the Temple Mount Movement

There is a clear and unambiguous symbiotic relationship between Christian and Jewish Zionist organisations committed to rebuilding the Jewish Temple. For example, Jews for Jesus provides information on, and offers direct Internet links to, eight extreme and militant Jewish organisations involved in attempts to destroy the Dome of the Rock, rebuild the Jewish Temple and re-institute Jewish Temple worship and sacrifices. These include the Temple Institute and Temple Mount Faithful.<sup>156</sup>

Now, however, despite the fact that two Muslim mosques sit upon the Temple Mount, there are Jewish groups concerned with training priests for the day that the Temple is restored. Aterah Kohanim is one such group. They have purchased many of the Arab homes in the Old City of Jerusalem, very near the Temple Mount. They have also set up yeshivas to educate and train Temple priests; two hundred men are in active training for the priesthood there now.<sup>157</sup>

Randall Price similarly provides information on how to contact and show solidarity with 18 different Temple organisations.<sup>158</sup>

One of the most extreme is the Temple Mount Faithful. Brickner points out, approvingly, that they are ready to commence building 'at any moment.'

They've cut a massive piece of limestone, a 4.5-ton cornerstone to begin their work. Their first attempt to bring it up to the Temple Mount was in 1989. Each year during Sukkot, the Feast of Tabernacles, they enact the elaborate water-drawing ceremony at the pool of Siloam, and then attempt to set the cornerstone for the rebuilding of the Temple. Each year the Israeli government authorities prevent them. The site remains a holy place for Muslims and it is under Islamic control. Israeli government officials have little stomach for actions that might well lead to riots or perhaps even World War III.<sup>159</sup>

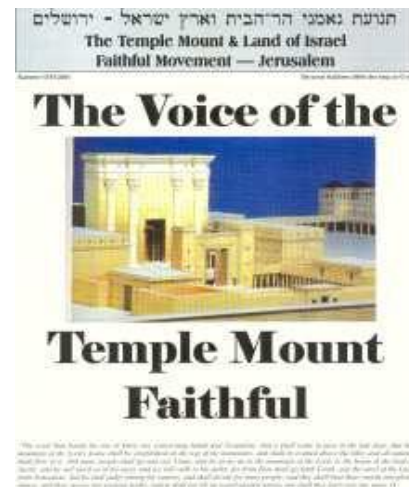
Zhava Glaser, also of Jews for Jesus, affirms the motives of Gershon Salomon, founder of The Temple Mount Faithful who has over 9,000 supporters. He describes Salomon as a 'man of courage', whose credentials as an Israeli patriot, soldier, politician and Zionist are 'impeccable'.<sup>160</sup>

Salomon has, however, become increasingly provocative in his assertions that the Dome of the Rock must be destroyed. Speaking at the Jerusalem Christian Zionist Congress in 1998, Salomon insisted,

The mission of the present generation is to liberate the Temple Mount and to remove - I repeat, to remove - the defiling abomination there ... The Jewish people will not be stopped at the gates leading to the Temple Mount ... We will fly our Israeli flag over the Temple Mount, which will be minus its Dome of the Rock and its mosques and will have only our Israeli flag and our Temple. This is what our generation must accomplish.<sup>161</sup>

According to Sam Kiley, Salomon is the '...almost acceptable face of millennial cults.' In a Times interview Salomon insisted that the Islamic shrine must be destroyed.

The Israeli Government must do it. We must have a war. There will be many nations against us but God will be our general. I am sure this is a test, that God is expecting us to move the Dome



with no fear from other nations. The Messiah will not come by himself, we should bring Him by fighting.<sup>162</sup>

Salomon believes Ariel Sharon's provocative visit to the Temple Mount, days before Barak and Arafat were to sign a deal on joint sovereignty of Jerusalem with Clinton, and his subsequent election as Israeli Prime Minister were acts of God.



Sharon's visit itself was not an accident. G-d put it in his heart to go up to the Temple Mount to display the eternal sovereignty of G-d over this most holy site and to give a very clear NO! To the terrible plans to give it away. These enemies of Israel understood the meaning of Sharon's visit to the Temple Mount. They started the war against Israel with the encouragement of all the Arab countries and their many allies all over the world. When these events stated, Barak became weaker and weaker as all the other parties in his coalition left him. This was the judgment of G-d, leading to the election by such a majority of the man who visited, fought, and demonstrated for Him and His holy mountain. It was also a clear message that G-d is determined to continue to save Israel and not allow any enemy to put his hand on His holy mountain and His holy city Jerusalem. He showed everyone that - whether they want it or not - the Temple Mount will very soon be the site of His holy temple.<sup>163</sup>

Gordon Welty, a sociologist and anthropologist, explains the apparent contradiction of evangelical Christians choosing to support Jewish terrorists.

Their power is to keep inconsistencies in airtight compartments, so that they themselves never recognize these inconsistencies... If the money a muscular Christian donates to the Jewish terrorists buys the dynamite that destroys the mosque, the muscular Christian will say simply, "It was an act of God."<sup>164</sup>

Such provocative convictions clearly have ramifications for the way Christian Zionists view Arabs generally and Palestinians, in particular.

### 6.3 Antipathy Toward Muslims

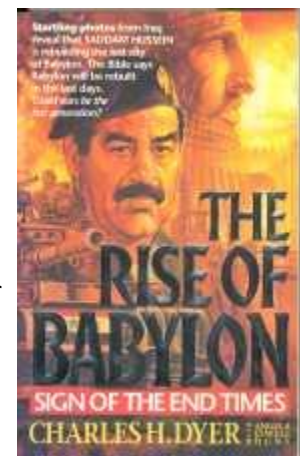
Support for extreme Jewish organisations among Christian Zionists is also associated with an antipathy for Islam. At the Third International Christian Zionist Congress, for example, held in 1996 under the auspices of the ICEJ, the following affirmation was endorsed.

The Islamic claim to Jerusalem, including its exclusive claim to the Temple Mount, is in direct contradiction to the clear biblical and historical significance of the city and its holiest site, and this claim is of later religio-political origin rather than arising from any Qur'anic text or early Muslim tradition...<sup>165</sup>

Similarly, in 1994, Lindsey predicted,

Two religions, Judaism and Islam, thus are on a collision course with global and heavenly repercussions... Islam will never accept Jerusalem as the undivided capital of the Jewish state, and Israel will never agree to give it up. This is the intractable, insoluble crisis that will soon result in the climax of world history.<sup>166</sup>

The whole prophetic scenario is in place. We see the Islamic nations united in mutual hatred of Israel. The dispute has nothing to do with borders or territory. It has to do with the existence of Israel and its claim on Jerusalem.<sup>167</sup> Such prejudice not only reinforces stereotypes but ignites racial hatred and becomes a self fulfilling prophecy for dispensationalists.



## 6.4 The Battle of Armageddon

Brickner is typical in his conviction that, based on his literalist reading of the Bible, that the rebuilding of the Temple will be associated with the deaths of most Israelis.

A full two-thirds of the population of Israel will perish in the ensuing conflict, according to Zechariah 13:8. The hope of the Jewish people in seeing the glorious Temple rebuilt will, in fact, lead to their greatest calamity and suffering.<sup>168</sup>

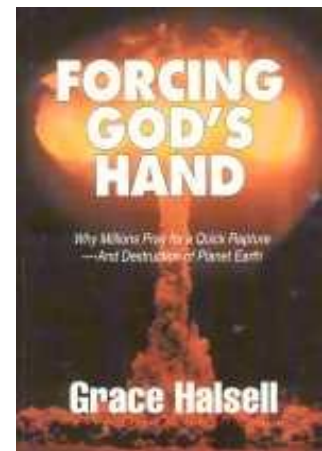
Rosen also speculates on such a future scenario, suggesting the Dome will be destroyed by scuds fired by Israel in an attempt to implicate Iraq, turning Muslim rage away from Israel and toward Saddam Hussein.

In truth, the fusillade of missiles had not all come from Iraq - only the ones which hit Jewish neighbourhoods. The rest were Scud-class missiles launched by Israelis from mobile launchers deployed deep in the Judean wilderness, near the Israeli/Jordanian border. Yitshak Shamir had his revenge.<sup>169</sup>

Lindsey describes in graphic detail what this apocalyptic future will be like.

The Russian force will establish command headquarters on Mount Moriah or the Temple area in Jerusalem. Daniel pointed this out when he said: 'And he shall pitch his palatial tents between the seas [Dead Sea and Mediterranean Sea] and the glorious holy mount Zion; yet he shall come to his end with none to help him' (Daniel 11:45 Amplified).<sup>170</sup>

Christian enthusiasm for the rebuilding of the Jewish Temple is therefore only part of a wider apocalyptic scenario of mass destruction in which the writings of prophets like Daniel, Ezekiel and the Book of Revelation are interpreted literally, allegedly describing pre-written history.<sup>171</sup>

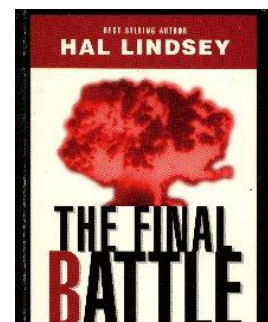


## 7. Conclusions

It has been shown that the Christian belief in, and support for, the rebuilding of the Jewish Temple arises generally from a premillennial eschatology and specifically from the novel dispensational distinction between Israel and the Church combined with, and arising from, an ultra-literalist and futurist hermeneutic. On the basis of allegedly unfulfilled Old and New Testament predictions, Christian Zionists are convinced that a third Temple will be built in place of, or near, the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem. They are also convinced that a Jewish priesthood will once again offer sacrifices and offerings. They also believe this yet to be built Temple will be desecrated by the Antichrist and replaced by a fourth Millennial Temple.

It has been shown that this conviction and the hermeneutic upon which it is based is flawed because it fails to recognise how Jesus Christ interprets, completes, and fulfils the role of the Temple with its sacrificial system. The Temple, and the Tabernacle before it, were indeed the places where God dwelt with his people and where their sin could be atoned for by sacrifice. The New Testament reveals how the Temple was, however, an illustration<sup>172</sup> a copy<sup>173</sup> and shadow<sup>174</sup> for the atoning work of Jesus Christ who now dwells on earth by the Holy Spirit. The Temple therefore finds its ultimate significance and fulfilment not in another man-made sanctuary but in Jesus Christ who is in heaven and in his Church on earth.<sup>175</sup>

The Book of Revelation expressly says that one day the two will be united and the Lord will dwell with his people and have no need of a Temple.<sup>176</sup>



*"Never before in our books has there been such a complete and detailed look at the events leading up to 'The Battle of Armageddon'."*



The Christian Zionist preoccupation, therefore, with locating the site of the Temple, with training priests, breeding red heifers and funding the Temple Treasury is at best a distraction from the gospel imperative and at worst promoting apostasy<sup>177</sup>

Christian support for the rebuilding of the Jewish Temple is also invariably linked to the political claims of exclusive Jewish sovereignty over not only the Temple Mount and Jerusalem but much of the Middle East as well. Whether intentionally or otherwise, therefore, Christian Zionists are complicit in perpetuating a form of apartheid as well as the ethnic cleansing of Palestinians from the Occupied Territories. Many regard this reading of history as questionable, coloured by a literal exegesis of highly selective biblical passages, profoundly misguided and essentially racist. Far from demonstrating a ministry of reconciliation to all nations, which is at the heart of the Christian faith, Zionism perpetuates religious intolerance and incites ethnic violence. Fuelled by a fatalistic conviction of an imminent apocalyptic war, Christian Zionists are indeed, 'anxious for Armageddon.'<sup>178</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Reuters, 8th January 2001.

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