

**THE TRIBULATION TEMPLE**  
*Tom's Perspectives*  
by Thomas Ice

It has been almost twenty years ago that Randall Price and I wrote a book titled *Ready to Rebuild: The Imminent Plan to Rebuild the Last Days Temple*.<sup>1</sup> Dr. Price has gone on to become one of the leading, if not the leading expert within American Evangelicalism on the Temple movement. Dr. Price wrote his PhD dissertation on the Temple at the University of Texas<sup>2</sup> and has produced a number of books on this topic, including a 750-page work.<sup>3</sup> So, are the Jews in Israel still "ready to rebuild" the third Temple as we noted in 1992? The answer is yes and even more so with each passing day.

**RECENT TRENDS**

In the past, Orthodox Jews, which are the Israelis primarily interested in rebuilding the Temple, have believed that they should not even go on top of the 35-acre Temple Mount area since they could possibly walk over top of where the holy or holies had been in a former Temple. Were something like this to occur, it would be considered an act of defilement. However, a new trend is gaining steam among the Orthodox.

Increasingly rabbis are teaching that Jews should ascend the Temple Mount. A news report from Jerusalem about a conference in 2009 that encouraged Jews to ascend the Temple Mount said, "They all joined together to call upon the Jewish public to ascend the Temple Mount, despite the harsh criticism directed at them from the Haredi sector as well as from some national-religious rabbis."<sup>4</sup>

Last summer, an Israeli member of Knesset or parliament (MK) toured the Temple Mount and declared, "'It is unacceptable that Muslims can ascend the Mount 24 hours a day, while Jews' freedom of worship is limited,' he said, after touring the Mount with a police escort, and under the watchful eyes of Muslim Wakf representatives."<sup>5</sup> MK Danny Danon of Likud the went on to say, "Religious Jews, who wear kippahs, can only ascend the Mount in groups of fifteen people, with police escort," he noted, "and they are forbidden from praying on the Mount. Secular [Jews] or tourists, on the other hand, can ascend freely."<sup>6</sup> "Danon announced that he would be asking the Minister for Public Security, Yitzchak Aharonovich, to change the existing instructions regarding the ascent of Jews onto the Mount. He added that 'the heart ached' at seeing the results of the illegal digging carried out by the Muslim Wakf in the south-eastern part of the Mount."<sup>7</sup>

Stories could be multiplied of an increasing desire on the part of Israeli Jews to see their Temple rebuilt. In light of an increasing interest and thrust by Israeli Jews to rebuild the Temple, there does not appear to be a legitimate scenario within today's political climate that might lead to the actual rebuilding of the Jewish Temple, which would be located where the current Islamic Dome of the Rock now stands.

**A SUGGESTED SCENARIO**

The Bible indicates that there will be a Temple located in Jerusalem during a future tribulation period of seven years (Dan. 9:24–27; Matt. 24:15–16; 2 Thess. 2:3–4; Rev. 11:1–2; 13:15). Presumably, that Temple would be rebuilt on the Temple Mount where

Israel's two previous Temples once stood. The next Temple could be built at any time between now and the middle of the seven-year tribulation, since the references cited above refer to an event called the "abomination of desolation" that will occur in the middle of the tribulation. Thus, it is reasonably concluded that this rebuilt Temple will have to be there some time before the middle of the tribulation, in order for it to function for an undetermined period of time before the Beast or Antichrist desolates it at the midpoint.

In the Revelation 11 passage, in which John is told to measure the Temple in his vision of the future, the two witnesses, after the fact that the Temple is mentioned, are the major focus of the rest of the chapter. In light of Revelation 11, Dr. John Whitcomb has suggested, as far as I am concerned, a likely scenario for the rebuilding of Israel's next Temple.

The significance of these words must not be minimized. First, for the Antichrist to cause the Jewish sacrifices to cease, the sacrificial system must have been previously instituted. Thus, part of the strong covenant with "the many" in Israel must be permission to offer sacrifices again "in the temple of God" (2 Thess. 2:4). In light of the current situation in Jerusalem, it would take a very powerful person to obtain and guarantee such access by Israel to the Temple area. It seems possible that the "two witnesses" of Revelation 11:3–6, who have irresistible authority in Jerusalem during the first three-and-one-half years, will also be instrumental in arranging the terms of this covenant with the "little horn," for not until they are killed by him (after he "comes up out of the abyss") is he able to break the covenant and terminate the sacrificial system.<sup>8</sup>

If we grant the viability of Dr. Whitcomb's scenario, it means that the antichrist could grant permission to the Jews to rebuild their Temple as part of the "strong covenant" mentioned in Daniel 9:27. This would mean that the Jews would be free to remove the Dome of the Rock and construct their Third Temple on that site. I would estimate, depending on how long it would take to properly remove the Dome of the Rock, that Israel could construct their Temple by the end of the first year, after the start of the seven-year period.

#### THE TWO WITNESSES

If the two witnesses of Revelation 11:3 conduct their ministry within the area of the newly constructed Temple, which makes sense with what we know from Revelation 11, then it appears likely that these two prophets would be able to provide cover and protection against the Beast (Antichrist) and the "earth dwellers," who oppose the Lord throughout the entire seven-year tribulation. The witnesses are also described as "the two anointed ones" in Zechariah 4:14.

The biblical text says, "And I will grant *authority* to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for twelve hundred and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth" (Rev. 11:3). The passage continues: "And if anyone desires to harm them, fire proceeds out of their mouth and devours their enemies; and if anyone would desire to harm them, in this manner he must be killed. These have the power to shut up the sky, in order that rain may not fall during the days of their prophesying; and they have power over the waters to turn them into blood, and to smite the earth with every plague, as often as they desire" (Rev. 11:5–6). Therefore, it is reasonable to see that the two witnesses, who have

at their disposal miraculous power to protect themselves, the newly built Temple, and the Jewish people, until their ministry is completed. “And when they have finished their testimony, the beast that comes up out of the abyss will make war with them, and overcome them and kill them” (Rev. 11:7). No one is going to be able to mess with them until the Lord removes His protection from them when their mission is complete.

Since the ministry of the two witnesses is said to be three-and-a-half years earlier (Rev. 11:3), this must be at the midpoint of the tribulation. The witnesses are then killed and their bodies lie in the streets of Jerusalem for three-and-a-half days (Rev. 11:7–8), an insult to them within Middle Eastern culture. Then suddenly, the two witnesses are resurrected by God and then caught up to heaven, as an apparent witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ (Rev. 11:11–12). “And in that hour there was a great earthquake, and a tenth of the city fell; and seven thousand people were killed in the earthquake, and the rest were terrified and gave glory to the God of heaven” (Rev. 11:13). Notice the statement “and the rest were terrified and gave glory to the God of heaven.” The rest is clearly set in apposition to the earth dwellers. I believe that “the rest” in this context refers to the Jewish Remnant that will be saved as a result of the “witness” of the two witnesses.

With the two witnesses out of the way, the obstruction to the Beast going into the rebuilt Jewish Temple will be gone. This sequence now allows for the Antichrist to go into the Temple and defile it, as predicted in the Bible.

### CONCLUSION

I believe that this scenario makes sense because it means that the ministry of the two witnesses fulfills God’s intention of converting the Jewish Remnant in Jerusalem and throughout Israel during the tribulation. This scenario also makes sense when we see that Jesus tells the Jews of Jerusalem and Judea to flee to the wilderness (Petra) when they see the abomination of desolation (Matt. 24:15–16). Only believing Jews would heed the warning of Jesus.

The Temple does not have to be built before the rapture. Nothing needs to take place before the rapture. The Temple only has to be there by the middle of the seven-year tribulation. Thus, it will take God’s intervention for Israel’s next Temple to be rebuilt. Such a rebuilding, if it were to happen today, would result in a wild jihad from the Muslim world, however, the Lord will one day bring it to pass. Maranatha!

### ENDNOTES

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<sup>1</sup> Thomas Ice & Randall Price, *Ready to Rebuild: The Imminent Plan to Rebuild the Last Days Temple* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 1992).

<sup>2</sup> J. Randall Price, “The Desecration and Restoration of the Temple as an Eschatological Motif in the Tanach, Jewish Apocalyptic Literature and the New Testament” (PhD dissertation, University of Texas at Austin, 1993).

<sup>3</sup> Randall Price, *The Temple and Bible Prophecy: A Definitive Look at Its Past, Present, and Future* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 1999/2005).

<sup>4</sup> Yair Ettinger, “Religious Zionist Rabbis: Ascend the Temple Mount,” (Haaretz.com, October 26, 2009).

<sup>5</sup> Gil Ronen, “MK Danon on Temple Mount: Stop Anti-Jewish Discrimination,” (Arutz Sheva, IsraelNationalNews.com, July 20, 2010).

<sup>6</sup> Ronen, “MK Danon on Temple Mount.”

<sup>7</sup> Ronen, “MK Danon on Temple Mount.”

<sup>8</sup> John C. Whitcomb, *Daniel, Everyman’s Bible Commentary* (Winona Lake, IN: BMH Books, 1985), p. 134.