

Will the Next Temple Be Legitimate?

Commentary for March 17, 2019 — Will It Also Be the Temple of the Antichrist?

To both questions the answer is: (1) Yes, the next Temple will be legitimate and (2) yes, it will be the Temple of the antichrist. The Herodian Temple was legitimate in spite of the fact that evil King Herod initiated its construction and it was operated by lawful but unrighteous priests. Christ's presence and statements validated the Herodian Temple. He taught (Matthew 21:23, 26:55) and healed people in the outer courts of the Temple (Matthew 21:14). Jesus called the Herodian Temple **"my Father's House"** (John 2:16). He never criticized its validity.

The apostles also taught and prayed at the Temple even after Stephen and James the Just were murdered. Paul purified himself at the Temple in Acts 21:26, 29–30. The Temple was the place of God's presence on earth until its destruction in 70 AD.

The Coming Temple in Ezekiel

After Christ returns (using the name YHWH) at the beginning of Christ's 1,000-year reign, observance of the Feast of Tabernacles will be mandatory for all nations (Zechariah chapter 14). Sacrifice of animals for Tabernacles is required in Leviticus 23:34–37. Those sacrifices will begin at the surviving Temple in Jerusalem until the full Ezekiel Temple is built and dedicated. The Ezekiel Temple will be huge, centered at Shiloh in the north, and encompassing Jerusalem on its southeast corner, where David will reign over Israel under Christ (Psalm 2:8–9; Jeremiah 30:9; Ezekiel 34:24, 37:24–25; Hosea 3:4–5).

The Coming Temple in Daniel

Jesus told us the abomination of desolation did not occur before His time. First to occur,

"[The] gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come ... When you therefore shall see [in the future] the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet [Daniel 9:26–27], stand in the holy place, ..." [Read on to verse 31.]

• **Matthew 24:14–15**

Then, the worst-ever tribulation will fall upon Israel. All life would end **"except those days be shortened"** (Matthew 24:21–22). **(1)** The prophesied abomination did not occur before Jesus came. **(2)** It did not happen in 70 AD when the Temple was destroyed. **(3)** It will come in our future. The next Temple will have a **"holy place"** (verse 14) where the abomination will occur. For the **"place"** to be **"holy,"** it must be honored by God, otherwise it is just another pagan temple. Again, the next temple will be legitimate.

The Coming Temple in Malachi

"Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom you seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom you delight in: behold, he shall come, says YHWH of hosts. But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he

appears? for he is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap ..."

• ***Malachi 3:1–2***

This prophecy has dual fulfillment. John the Baptist fulfilled his part and a second messenger will do his part before Christ's return in glory (see "[The Elijah to Come](#)"). This second messenger will likely be one of the two witnesses. He will restore the sacrifices as Elijah would do (compare Matthew 17:11 and Acts 3:21). Malachi chapter 3 later tells of severe judgment at Christ's return, which did not happen at the first coming of Jesus. His sudden coming "**to His temple**" refers to a future Temple that He will reclaim and purify. He would not have to do so if it was illegitimate. (Read "[The Rebuilding of the Temple](#).")

The Two Witnesses and Temple Legitimacy

Revelation chapter 11 presents two witnesses, two men brought forth in our future today. Verse 1 speaks of taking a measuring rod, a reed in the hand of one of the men. (In Ezekiel when a reed was taken in hand, it was associated with priests.) He is told to measure for the rebuilding of a Temple. This will not be Ezekiel's millennial Temple. The two witnesses have a part in rebuilding the Temple prior to Christ's second coming. The "**sons of oil**" from Zechariah 4:11 are identified as a second fulfillment in Revelation chapter 11.

The purpose of the two witnesses sent from God will be to validate the next Temple and its services as legitimate. They will have authority and power to do these things as part of the "**restitution of all things**" (see "[Restitution and the Temple](#)" and "[The Coming Revolution in Knowledge](#)"). There is no indication God will use supernatural approval or fire from heaven to show the legitimacy of the coming Temple or anything else (Matthew 12:39).¹ The people of Israel will seek righteousness because "**a spirit of grace and supplications**" will come upon them beginning at Jerusalem (Zechariah 12:10 to the end of chapter 14).

The two witnesses will be successful for several years. When they are opposed by the anti-christ and false prophet, they likely will "witness" to Israel regarding God's soon coming salvation and rescue. The two opposing the witnesses take control and change the Temple administration. During that time the two righteous men will fearlessly witness on behalf of YHWH, His word, and the resurrected Messiah, Christ Jesus, while the legal biblical sacrifices and offerings will be suspended for 3½ years (Daniel 9:26–27).

The sequence of events is this: antichrist will gain power in Jerusalem. Later he will seat himself in the Temple (2 Thessalonians 2:4). He will suspend the sacrifices. The abomination of desolation will occur (Daniel 11:31, 12:11; Matthew 24:15; and Mark 13:14). The two witnesses will be killed and remain dead for 3 days before Christ returns. After Christ suppresses opposition to His reign, then after some 70 years of recovery, construction will begin on the millennial Temple of Ezekiel's vision.²

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¹ A false sign of fire from heaven may be provided by the second beast (the false prophet) to show false divine approval of the antichrist (Revelation 13:13–14, 2 Thessalonians 2:9–10).

² The Ezekiel Temple will be built by ordinary people, unlike the New Jerusalem in heaven.