



The "Third" Temple is Already Underway

⁸Let them **construct a sanctuary for Me**, that I may dwell among them. ⁹According to all that I am going to show you, as the pattern of the tabernacle and the pattern of all its furniture, just so you shall construct it.

— Exodus 25:8-9

¹⁷Now **it was in the heart of my father David to build a house for the name of the LORD, the God of Israel.** ¹⁸But the LORD said to my father David, 'Because it was in your heart to build a house for My name, you did well that it was in your heart. ¹⁹Nevertheless you shall not build the house, but **your son who will be born to you, he will build the house for My name.**'

— 1 Kings 8:17-19

"Behold, **I intend to build a house for the name of the LORD my God,** as the LORD spoke to David my father, saying, 'Your son, whom I will set on your throne in your place, he will build the house for My name.'

— 1 Kings 5:5

¹Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, in order to fulfill the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah, **the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia,** so that he sent a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and also put it in writing, saying: ²"Thus says Cyrus king of Persia, 'The LORD, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth and **He has appointed me to build Him a house in Jerusalem,** which is in Judah.

— Ezra 1:1-2

⁷He said to me, "Son of man, **this is the place of My throne and the place of the soles of My feet, where I will dwell among the sons of Israel forever.** And the house of Israel will not again defile My holy name, neither they nor their kings...¹¹If they are ashamed of all that they have done, make known to them the design of the house, its structure, its exits, its entrances, all its designs, all its statutes, and all its laws. And write it in their sight, **so that they may observe its whole design and all its statutes and do them.**

— Ezekiel 43:7a, 11

The Lord commanded Moses and Aaron to build the Tabernacle, the forerunner of the more permanent structure of the Temple to come. Likewise, through David and with his assistance even before death, his son Solomon was designated by God to construct the

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First Temple. The return of Israel from its 70-year Babylonian Captivity was initiated by God's commandment through Cyrus to build the Second Temple, which would be overseen by Joshua and Zerubbabel. And finally, in Ezekiel 40-44, God provides the specifications for what we call the Millennial Temple which will serve as Christ's earthly throne during His thousand-year reign. It is not stated in the text of Scripture who, if anyone, will oversee its construction. What is obviously missing from this established pattern? There is no commandment from God in the whole of Scripture to construct what we commonly call the Third or Tribulational Temple. It is clearly implied in Scripture by the references to the final Abomination of Desolation and associated activities of the Antichrist and False Prophet that there **will** be a temple, but it is not authorized or endorsed by God. This is because the Church— the Bride of Christ— has become the temple on earth. (1 Cor. 3:16; 2 Cor. 6:16; Eph. 2:21) We should actually call it the Antichrist's Temple.

Common Elements

The one thing both the Tribulational and Millennial Temples have in common is that they are both divinely measured.

*¹Then there was given me a measuring rod like a staff; and someone said, "Get up and **measure the temple of God and the altar, and those who worship in it.**"²Leave out the court which is outside the temple and do not measure it, for it has been given to the nations; and they will tread under foot the holy city for forty-two months.*

— Revelation 11:1-2

*¹In the twenty-fifth year of our exile, at the beginning of the year, on the tenth of the month, in the fourteenth year after the city was taken, on that same day the hand of the LORD was upon me and He brought me there...⁴The man said to me, "Son of man, see with your eyes, hear with your ears, and give attention to all that I am going to show you; for you have been brought here in order to show it to you. Declare to the house of Israel all that you see."⁵And behold, there was a wall on the outside of the temple all around, and **in the man's hand was a measuring rod of six cubits,** each of which was a cubit and a handbreadth. So he measured the thickness of the wall, one rod; and the height, one rod.*

— Ezekiel 40:1,4-5

This kind of biblical activity is used to not only measure something literally, but even more importantly to measure it spiritually. The Tribulational Temple is going to be compromised by Gentile suppression during the final half of Daniel's 70th Week, and the chapters providing the design of the Millennial Temple in Ezekiel are filled with instructions of how it is going to be protected by anything which might defile it.

Note that the design of the Millennial Temple was provided on the very day the First Temple was destroyed. While there is no scriptural statement that the Second Temple was erroneously patterned after the First Temple instead of according to this design provided through the Prophet Ezekiel, it is noteworthy that the Shekinah glory never

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enters the Second Temple but is a permanent feature of the Millennial Temple, which is also designated as Christ's throne.

In fact, this author is confused as to why Herod's Temple is not universally called the "Third Temple". He took the Second Temple apart stone by stone and completely replaced it with a much more impressive structure greatly influenced by Greek and Roman architecture. Extra-biblical Jewish sources relate how proud they were that it was constructed without the sound of a hammer in its vicinity. But there were features which were clearly unbiblical, such as assigning a male and female gender to the two cherubim placed in the Holy of Holies even though it never held the Ark of the Covenant. Many erroneous teachings within Judaism evolved from this abomination and other distorted features of Herod's variation.

Since the current Temple Institute, the organization which has already prepared everything necessary for another temple, has models of what it intends to build which are based more on Herod's Temple, perhaps Herod's interpretation is an Antichrist precursor to the Tribulational Temple. The final one will be even worse than Herod's forerunner. But don't be surprised when, during this temple's construction, included are things which are outright unbiblical and many more which create a subtle counterfeit or distortion of the biblically authentic.

The Beginning of the Process

If we examine the biblical text of the examples of God's authorized Tabernacle, and the First and Second Temples, each is overseen by a designated pair (Moses and Aaron, David and Solomon, Joshua and Zerubbabel), and each project first organizes not only all the materials necessary for the building aspect, but at this early stage also organizes the priests and Levites who will operate each respective authorized facility. This was a particular feature of the Second Temple which this author uses to compare what is currently taking place in present-day Israel.

*⁵Then the heads of fathers' households of Judah and Benjamin and the priests and the Levites arose, even everyone whose spirit God had stirred to go up and rebuild the house of the Lord which is in Jerusalem. ⁶**All those about them encouraged them with articles of silver, with gold, with goods, with cattle and with valuables, aside from all that was given as a freewill offering.** ⁷**Also King Cyrus brought out the articles of the house of the LORD,** which Nebuchadnezzar had carried away from Jerusalem and put in the house of his gods; ⁸and Cyrus, king of Persia, had them brought out by the hand of Mithredath the treasurer, and he counted them out to Sheshbazzar, the prince of Judah.*

— Ezra 1:5-8

The Temple Institute has reconstructed every vessel, vestment, and item that is scripturally mandated for temple service, even constructing the altar and larger items necessary for processing the sacrifices and observing the rituals in the Holy Place just outside the Holy of Holies.

⁶¹Of the sons of the priests: the sons of Habaiah, the sons of Hakkoz, the sons of Barzillai, who took a wife from the daughters of Barzillai the Gileadite, and he was called by their name. ⁶²**These searched among their ancestral registration, but they could not be located; therefore they were considered unclean and excluded from the priesthood.** ⁶³The governor said to them that they should not eat from the most holy things until a priest stood up with Urim and Thummim.

— Ezra 2:61-63

¹Now when these things had been completed, the princes approached me, saying, "The people of Israel and the priests and the Levites have not separated themselves from the peoples of the lands, according to their abominations, those of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Jebusites, the Ammonites, the Moabites, the Egyptians and the Amorites. ²**For they have taken some of their daughters as wives for themselves and for their sons, so that the holy race has intermingled with the peoples of the lands; indeed, the hands of the princes and the rulers have been foremost in this unfaithfulness.**" ³When I heard about this matter, I tore my garment and my robe, and pulled some of the hair from my head and my beard, and sat down appalled.

— Ezra 9:1-3

In just the span of 70 years, many of the priests who could only come from the tribe of Levi and from one of three clans, had not maintained the proper documentation to prove their direct lineage unambiguously going back to Aaron. Such was necessary in order to prove the difference between a Levite who provided support for Temple operations from the specially qualified Levites who were not only authorized to act in the role of priest, but a possible candidate for High Priest.

Until recently, there had been decades of speculation about how this was going to be accomplished after nearly 2,000 years away from Israel and, until the past 10-15 years really, no hope seen for another Temple anyway. It is difficult to believe the claims of those who say they have maintained such verifiable documentation, especially since at the time of Jesus' First Coming the main repository of these records was Herod's Temple which was destroyed in 70 AD. Modern Israel in the past few decades has become a world leader in DNA research in the pursuit of trying to determine not just Jewish ethnicity but specific membership in each of its tribes. As public support for a new Temple has gained momentum in modern-day Israel, the question became focused on the potential reconstitution of priests and Levites.

This is all a moot point now with the actions of the self-appointed Sanhedrin now active in Israel. In cross-partnership with the Temple Institute, who during Hanukkah in December of 2019 designated priests, dressing them in the vestments and issuing them the trumpets prepared by the Institute to provide a kind of re-birth of the Temple rituals as well as the priesthood. They have expanded this each year since, relying not only on the claims of having kept what amounts to having a documented 3,000-year family tree, but even more so relying on the last names. For instance, one of the three direct descendants of Aaron was Kohan whose progeny were known as the Kohanim. So Jews

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who spent the diaspora in Europe are thought to have had their last name altered to “Cohen” and are believed to be descendants of the Kohanim.

But after the Second Temple was completed, an additional problem arose in Ezra’s time when he discovered that although many priests could prove their lineage, they had violated scriptural standards by inter-marrying with Gentiles. To put this in the present-day context, the only person who is qualified to be a priest must not only provide a certifiable record of his lineage for the past 3,000 years, but cannot have a single direct relative in the diaspora of the past 2,000 years who took a non-ethnically Jewish bride. No one listed in their lineage can have intermarried with a Gentile for the past two millennia.

First of all, this author maintains this is a major reason why Christ’s lineage is so thoroughly documented in the Gospels. He is our High Priest (Heb. 4:14-15) and the only living Jew who can document His lineage accurately. Second, this issue has been raised in order to point out the very important detail that this third Tribulational Temple from its inception is about to be constructed and operated by a biblically corrupt priesthood. Because these men have deceived themselves into thinking they are qualified to operate the Temple, they are predisposed to allowing the Antichrist to use it for his own purposes. And as we shall see, they have already paved the way for the Antichrist’s prophetic fulfillment in just the past 2-3 years. The authentic Temples were overseen by righteous figures called by God; the Tribulational Temple is being built by spiritually compromised men acting by their own will who will be challenged by the Two Witnesses.

Re-establishment of the Sacrifices

*¹Now when the seventh month came, and the sons of Israel were in the cities, the people gathered together as one man to Jerusalem. ²Then Jeshua the son of Jozadak and his brothers the priests, and Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel and his brothers arose and built the altar of the God of Israel to offer burnt offerings on it, as it is written in the law of Moses, the man of God. ³So **they set up the altar on its foundation**, for they were terrified because of the peoples of the lands; and **they offered burnt offerings on it to the LORD**, burnt offerings morning and evening.*

*⁴**They celebrated the Feast of Booths**, as it is written, **and offered the fixed number of burnt offerings daily**, according to the ordinance, as each day required; ⁵and afterward there was a continual burnt offering, **also for the new moons and for all the fixed festivals of the LORD that were consecrated, and from everyone who offered a freewill offering to the LORD.***

*⁶From the first day of the seventh month they began to offer burnt offerings to the LORD, **but the foundation of the temple of the LORD had not been laid.***

— Ezra 3:1-6

This is where it gets very interesting. We must remember that Satan’s favorite tactic is to counterfeit the authentic.

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I looked, and behold, a white horse, and he who sat on it had a bow; and a crown was given to him, and he went out conquering and to conquer.

— Revelation 6:2

¹¹And I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse, and He who sat on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and wages war. ¹²His eyes are a flame of fire, and on His head are many diadems; and He has a name written on Him which no one knows except Himself. ¹³He is clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. ¹⁴And the armies which are in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, were following Him on white horses. ¹⁵From His mouth comes a sharp sword, so that with it He may strike down the nations, and He will rule them with a rod of iron; and He treads the wine press of the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty. ¹⁶And on His robe and on His thigh He has a name written, "KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS."

— Revelation 19:11-16

One of the near-universal points of agreement between scholars of competing eschatologies is that Revelation 6:1-2 is describing the arrival of the Antichrist in a pre-counterfeit of Christ coming on the white horse. If all you remember is that Christ will return on a white horse, you could be deceived by this counterfeit. But when you examine him closely with the aid of Scripture, you see discrepancies such as carrying a bow instead of a sword or wearing just a single crown instead of many.

This kind of counterfeit is taking place before our very eyes when it comes to the process by which this temple is currently being pursued versus the authentic one of Ezra's time. On the surface it **feels** biblical. To begin with, we have ignored the absence of a commandment by God to build this temple as well as alterations to the sequence provided for the other Temples but especially as documented in Ezra:

1. **"...they set up the altar on its foundation..."** (Ezra 3:3) This means that they set the altar up in its permanent place. It would not move from that spot as the rest of the Second Temple was built around it.

During Hanukkah in December of 2019, the Temple Institute in concert with the self-appointed Sanhedrin, set up the actual altar intended to go into the new temple just outside of the Temple Mount complex next to the Wailing Wall. They have made it out of blocks they believe are a biblically approved material and which can be relocated at will to any location they please. Even when the altar of the original Tabernacle was moved to a new place, its altar was never set up wherever one wished but always in the same, exact location within the Tabernacle compound. But this new one is being used and relocated at will.

2. **"...they offered burnt offerings on it to the LORD..."** (Ezra 3:3) Several years ago the Sanhedrin reintroduced ritual sacrifices beginning first with the Passover lamb. Since this was not a sacrifice requiring a Temple or priesthood, and could be accomplished in a private setting, it was the natural place to begin. However, what began with a few of the sacrifices being restored during Hanukkah of December 2019 escalated during Hanukkah of December 2020 to a re-establishment of many more of the sacrifices.

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Notice that it is specified that the very first offerings re-established were the “*burnt offerings*”, meaning they began with repentance. The current leadership has yet to revisit the burnt offerings and has first established most of the others instead. Repentance of sin is apparently not high on their list and betrays their true agenda that they treat these things ritualistically rather than as true worship or service to God.

3. ***“They celebrated the Feast of Booths...”*** (Ezra 3:4) There is actually a building ordinance in Israel requiring all apartments to be constructed with a balcony so that occupants can celebrate the Feast of Booths, a practice that has not disappeared from modern Judaism. However, the celebrations that the current Sanhedrin, supported by the Temple Institute, seem to most emphasize are Hanukkah, Tisha B’av, and Purim. These are not specified in Scripture and were later added by Judaism to the official calendar. But their starting point was Passover with a follow-on emphasis especially on Hanukkah.

It is interesting to note that these three added celebrations all have an Antichrist component attached to them:

- ✓ Hanukkah was originally the celebration of the independence won from the closest figure in Scripture to the Antichrist, Antiochus Epiphanes IV, or as he and the Antichrist are called in Daniel 11, “*the king of the north*”. Epiphanes erected a statue of Zeus in the Holy of Holies using his own face for the idol and sacrificed a pig on the temple’s altar in an act of self-deification which prefigures the Antichrist going into the Tribulational Temple and proclaiming himself to be God.
- ✓ Tisha B’av, approximately August 9th or so on our calendar, is the remembrance of when, on the same day many centuries apart, an Antichrist Babylonian king and an Antichrist Roman king destroyed the First and Second Temples. The physical destruction symbolizes the complete spiritual corruption the Antichrist will visit on the Tribulational Temple.
- ✓ Purim is the celebration of the overthrow of the Antichrist Haman whose plan was to exterminate all the ethnic Jews in the entire known world. This is one of the main objectives associated with the Antichrist, his agenda to eradicate every Jew from the planet.

It is wise to keep a particularly fixed eye on what takes place on these dates. The agenda of the Antichrist has moved forward in our time on these dates and the Israeli press comes alive on those holidays far more than on the authorized holidays of the biblically sanctified calendar.

4. ***“...and offered the fixed number of burnt offerings daily...also for the new moons and for all the fixed festivals of the LORD that were consecrated, and from everyone who offered a freewill offering to the LORD.”*** (Ezra 3:4-5)

As noted previously, these are some of the things the current self-appointed priesthood has started with instead of the burnt sacrifices in the character of those who built the Second Temple.

5. ***“...but the foundation of the temple of the LORD had not been laid.”*** (Ezra 3:6)

All of these things took place ***before*** the foundation of the Temple had been laid: the gathering of materials, the plans, the re-establishment of the priests and Levites, and the re-institution of the sacrifices on the final altar set in its permanent position even though

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the rest of the Temple still lacked its foundation. This counterfeit appears to be the real deal until we compare it to Scripture and the way God brought forth the authentic, and then we realize that something else— or someone else— is at work.

The Battle for Purity

*¹Now when the enemies of Judah and Benjamin heard that the people of the exile were building a temple to the LORD God of Israel, ²they approached Zerubbabel and the heads of fathers' households, and said to them, "**Let us build with you, for we, like you, seek your God; and we have been sacrificing to Him** since the days of Esarhaddon king of Assyria, who brought us up here."*

*³But Zerubbabel and Jeshua and the rest of the heads of fathers' households of Israel said to them, "**You have nothing in common with us in building a house to our God;** but we ourselves will together build to the LORD God of Israel, as King Cyrus, the king of Persia has commanded us."*

— Ezra 4:1-3

In the ancient world it was a common practice to relocate conquered peoples to other lands so as to control them. Just as Israel and Judah were displaced and had to physically return from Babylon to the land of Israel, both the Assyrians who conquered Northern Israel and the Babylonians who conquered Judah had transplanted people from other conquered nations to the land of Israel. Because there was a shared belief among these Gentile nations that each land was overseen by a particular god, they would incorporate that deity into their worship practices. Therefore, when they say, "*we have been sacrificing to Him*", they have not been doing so according to the Mosaic Law and the requirements in the Torah but have been merely using His name in their Pagan practices. This is why Joshua and Zerubbabel can say, "*You have nothing in common with us*".

There was a problem, a conflict, with the local Gentile population who desired to take an active role in not just rebuilding the Temple but in its continued operation. While most Middle East neighbors of modern-day Israel still object to the construction of a temple (a few have recently reversed that position), the problem today is the opposite from the Jewish side of the equation. For the past few years, the current Sanhedrin has actually been publicly calling for the involvement of **all** nations and **all** peoples. The nascent Sanhedrin has lowered the bar and announced that anyone observing the Sabbath (according to their standards rather than true biblical requirements) can worship in the new anticipated facility and even contribute to its construction costs. They are even collecting funds from unbelieving Gentiles to offset construction costs. Instead of excluding the biblically unclean, today's Sanhedrin is inviting them to participate and be a part of it.

What this indicates is the presence of an Antichrist agenda at the earliest stages of this man-minded project. They are unknowingly preparing the path for the Antichrist to be all things to all peoples, but in particular to be a unifying figure legitimized by his future association with the Tribulational Temple. The current Sanhedrin is aiding in the creation of the one-world religion which characterizes the rule of the Antichrist by encouraging and even welcoming everyone's involvement. The Catholic Church would like to organize it under the pope; the Jews would like to see it unified by the Tribulational Temple.

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The Temple Tax

Another related practice that has been resurrected in just the past two or three years is reinstatement of the temple tax which has a history of questionable practices. This is due to the fact that there is no requirement within the Torah for this tax. Income to operate the Temple came from offerings and the redemption of every firstborn along with freewill offerings.

*¹⁵“Every first issue of the womb of all flesh, whether man or animal, which they offer to the LORD, shall be yours; nevertheless **the firstborn of man you shall surely redeem**, and the firstborn of unclean animals you shall redeem. ¹⁶As to their redemption price, **from a month old you shall redeem them, by your valuation, five shekels** in silver, according to the shekel of the sanctuary, which is twenty gerahs.*

— Numbers 18:15-16

Other supporting Scripture indicates that this was to be paid to the Levites for the operation of the Temple by an annual contribution of a half shekel for every Israelite male.

*¹³“This is what everyone who is numbered shall give: **half a shekel** according to the shekel of the sanctuary (the shekel is twenty gerahs), half a shekel as a contribution to the LORD. ¹⁴**Everyone who is numbered, from twenty years old and over, shall give the contribution to the LORD.** ¹⁵The rich shall not pay more and the poor shall not pay less than the half shekel, when you give the contribution to the LORD to make atonement for yourselves. ¹⁶**You shall take the atonement money from the sons of Israel and shall give it for the service of the tent of meeting**, that it may be a memorial for the sons of Israel before the LORD, to make atonement for yourselves.”*

— Exodus 30:13-16

Only males were numbered and this was an annual part of the atonement process. This is the same tax famously paid by Christ and Peter with a shekel coming from a fish’s mouth. (Mt. 17:24-27)

The temple tax, on the other hand, seems to be something initiated in the time of Nehemiah when the Israelites who returned to the land signed an agreement to re-establish God’s covenant with Israel.

*³⁸“Now because of all this
We are making an agreement in writing;
And on the sealed document are the names of our leaders,
our Levites and our priests.”*

— Nehemiah 9:38

One of the things to which they obligated their selves was a perpetual temple tax which, interestingly enough, is never mentioned in the New Testament.

*³²We also placed ourselves under obligation to **contribute yearly one third of a shekel for the service of the house of our God**; ³³for the showbread, for the continual grain*

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offering, for the continual burnt offering, the sabbaths, the new moon, for the appointed times, for the holy things and for the sin offerings to make atonement for Israel, and all the work of the house of our God.

— Nehemiah 10:32-33

But the more important point about these taxes is that they were never collected from anyone except ethnic Israel. They were never accepted, much less levied, on Gentiles. And yet, beginning 2 years ago, the present Sanhedrin began collecting and accepting a temple tax from anyone, Jew and Gentile alike. Each year's new coin has been issued around Hanukkah.

Now this comes under the heading of "do what I say, not what I do", because to pay this tax in order to get the coin they offer is actually funding the Antichrist temple. But at Hanukkah of 2020 this author paid the \$60 and the Sanhedrin sent him that year's coin. (Shades of the moneychangers, eh?) No background check was necessary, they just took my money.

It has writing in Hebrew which is also translated into English, and on the front side has the profiles of then President Trump in the foreground, followed by Netanyahu of Israel, and finally in the back that of Cyrus who authorized the Second Temple. The idea was to compare Trump's and Netanyahu's policies and actions as equivalent to those of Cyrus who restored the Temple.

Aside from the violation of Scripture in accepting this tax from anyone, it is an interesting testimony to how far present-day Jewish leadership has fallen. In Jesus' time, coins with someone's image on them were considered a violation of the commandment against graven images. They were also highly protective of allowing Gentile influences and involvement in Judaic practices because of so many Gentiles present not just in Israel in general but Jerusalem in particular. The inclusion of non-believing Gentiles in the present climate would be denounced as not just a mere violation of scriptural requirements but as a biblically qualified abomination. In fact, we can already see the very early stages of the fulfillment of the final Abomination of Desolation to come.

The Two Olive Trees

*These are **the two olive trees** and the two lampstands that stand before the Lord of the earth.*

— Revelation 11:4

*¹¹Then I said to him, "What are these **two olive trees** on the right of the lampstand and on its left?" ¹²And I answered the second time and said to him, "What are the two olive branches which are beside the two golden pipes, which empty the golden oil from themselves?"*

¹³So he answered me, saying, "Do you not know what these are?"

And I said, "No, my lord."

¹⁴Then he said, "These are the two anointed ones who are standing by the Lord of the whole earth."

— Zechariah 4:11-14

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For a number of reasons, when it comes to the Two Witnesses of Revelation 11, the vast majority of scholars, authors, and commentaries begin with the appearance of Moses and Elijah in the vision on the Mt. of Transfiguration. (Mt. 17) While this pair may eventually be enfolded into the overall discussion, the correct starting point is Joshua and Zerubbabel, the only pair in Scripture who are called by the same designation as the Two Witnesses: “*the two olive trees*”. In other words, to understand the role and ministry of the Two Witnesses, we need to first understand everything we can about the role and ministry of Joshua and Zerubbabel.

It is obvious that both pair have major roles when it comes to a temple. The conflict Joshua and Zerubbabel experienced to keep out unclean (by biblical standards) outside involvement may be a main feature of the Two Witnesses who testify to that same kind of corruption continually tolerated in the Tribulational Temple. Neither pair are involved in some kind of campaign of spiritual reconciliation or evangelization but rather drawing the line between the biblically qualified and disqualified.

Zechariah 3 is dedicated to a vision concerning Joshua while Zechariah 4 is exclusively focused on Zerubbabel. These foreshadow the character and role of a final prophetic fulfillment in the Two Witnesses and must be considered the primary foundation for this final pair before considering any other possible biblical examples.

Zechariah 3: Joshua

It is essential that we recognize that everything assigned to Joshua is shown to have a deeper meaning where the work of Christ is concerned, and everything in Zechariah 4 for Zerubbabel has a deeper parallel to the work of the Spirit. This is explored in a little more detail in the Walk with the Word Bible studies “[Zechariah 3 • The Work of the Son](#)” and “[Zechariah 4 • The Work of the Spirit](#)”.

¹Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the LORD, and Satan standing at his right hand to accuse him. ²The LORD said to Satan, “The LORD rebuke you, Satan! Indeed, the LORD who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you! Is this not a brand plucked from the fire?”

³Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments and standing before the angel. ⁴He spoke and said to those who were standing before him, saying, “Remove the filthy garments from him.”

Again he said to him, “See, I have taken your iniquity away from you and will clothe you with festal robes.”

⁵Then I said, “Let them put a clean turban on his head.” So they put a clean turban on his head and clothed him with garments, while the angel of the LORD was standing by.

⁶And the angel of the LORD admonished Joshua, saying, ⁷“Thus says the LORD of hosts, ‘If you will walk in My ways and if you will perform My service, then you will also govern My house and also have charge of My courts, and I will grant you free access among these who are standing here.

— Zechariah 3:1-7

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This shows us the ongoing heavenly conflict between Satan our adversary and Christ our advocate. Joshua the High Priest is called “*a brand plucked from the fire*”, which is an Old Testament expression of the rescue of a sinner. His sin is further symbolized by the filthy garments, that meaning explained in verse 4 when it is stated, “*I have taken your iniquity away from you*”. A turban was a feature of the High Priest’s garments and represents his authority, which would seem to symbolize the restoration of the priesthood. This is confirmed in verses 6-7 where all the conditions for spiritual faithfulness are explained in order to “*perform My service*”, “*govern My house*”, and “*have charge of My courts*”.

Where the Two /witnesses are concerned, it would seem that the priesthood and the operation of the Tribulational Temple are going to be major issues. This is interesting in that since the 1,260 days of their ministry corresponds to the second half of the 70th Week beginning with the Abomination of Desolation. Those of the priesthood who continue to operate that temple will be out-and-out servants of the Antichrist and False Prophet. They will definitely fail to meet the expectations of verses 6-7 specified as “*walk in my ways*”.

8'Now listen, Joshua the high priest, you and your friends who are sitting in front of you—indeed they are men who are a symbol, for behold, I am going to bring in My servant the Branch. 9For behold, the stone that I have set before Joshua; on one stone are seven eyes. Behold, I will engrave an inscription on it,' declares the LORD of hosts, 'and I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day. 10In that day,' declares the LORD of hosts, 'every one of you will invite his neighbor to sit under his vine and under his fig tree.'"

— Zechariah 3:8-10

As biblical prophecy often does, it will move back and forth to speak about the Prophet’s own time, the Messiah’s First Coming, His Second Coming, or any combination of the three. Such a sudden change is seen here as these verses speak of things yet to come, in this case the final coming of the Messiah when He establishes His unprecedented peaceful Millennial Reign.

Joshua and Zerubbabel and the Two Witnesses are not only called “*the two olive trees*” but in Zechariah 4:12 “*the two olive branches*” and they are further designated “*the two anointed ones standing by the Lord of the whole earth*” (Zech. 4:14) Here we not only have the Messiah identified as “*My servant **the** Branch*”, but as an engraved stone. Whereas Joshua The High Priest was plucked from the fire individually, at the final coming the Messiah “*will remove the iniquity of that land in one day*”. Whereas the most the priesthood could do was to temporarily cover sin as seen in the High Priest’s role in the Day of Atonement, the Messiah as a member of the Godhead will eradicate it. Among other things, Christ is **the** Branch, or in the Gospel of John **the** Vine (Jn. 15:1-11), from which everyone else springs, and like the original Ten Commandments is the stone upon which the Word is engraved.

Where the Two Witnesses are concerned this may hint at a major emphasis of their ministry, but certainly speaks of the work of the Messiah through them who, after the removal of the Church, is going to pluck the faithful remnant of Israel from the fire, graft them back in (Rom. 11:23), and re-establish them in His Word as He transitions them from the 70th Week into the Millennial Kingdom.

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Zechariah 4: Zerubbabel

¹Then the angel who was speaking with me returned and roused me, as a man who is awakened from his sleep. ²He said to me, "What do you see?"

And I said, "I see, and behold, a lampstand all of gold with its bowl on the top of it, and its seven lamps on it with seven spouts belonging to each of the lamps which are on the top of it; ³also two olive trees by it, one on the right side of the bowl and the other on its left side." ⁴Then I said to the angel who was speaking with me saying, "What are these, my lord?"

⁵So the angel who was speaking with me answered and said to me, "Do you not know what these are?"

And I said, "No, my lord."

⁶Then he said to me, "This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel saying, 'Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,' says the LORD of hosts. ⁷What are you, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel you will become a plain; and he will bring forth the top stone with shouts of "Grace, grace to it!"

— Zechariah 4:1-7

Joshua, as High Priest, was a direct descendant of Aaron, so it is natural that in the vision featuring him the subject is the Temple and priesthood. Zerubbabel descended directly from King David, so it should not surprise us to encounter something equivalent to a kingdom. In this case, one of the most familiar biblical metaphors for a kingdom is a mountain. Here the emphasis is on overcoming a "*great mountain*"— singular. The prophetic goal posts are once again suddenly moved to the Second Coming to re-state what was revealed in Nebuchadnezzar's original dream interpreted by Daniel (Dan. 2) that the final Antichrist kingdom would be demolished by the kingdom of Christ. No kingdom built on man's might or by his own power can withstand the Spirit. Here, as the Holy Spirit always does, He points to Christ.

⁸Also the word of the LORD came to me, saying, ⁹"The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house, and his hands will finish it. Then you will know that the LORD of hosts has sent me to you. ¹⁰For who has despised the day of small things? But these seven will be glad when they see the plumb line in the hand of Zerubbabel—these are the eyes of the LORD which range to and fro throughout the earth."

— Zechariah 4:8-10

Whereas the emphasis on Joshua focused on the operation and service of the Temple, it is directed at the physical structure where Zerubbabel is concerned. As discussed previously, the plumb line is a biblical metaphor for something measured according to God's Word, and in this case will meet those standards, confirmed by Christ Himself.

⁹"For the eyes of the LORD move to and fro throughout the earth that He may strongly support those whose heart is completely His. You have acted foolishly in this. Indeed, from now on you will surely have wars."

— 2 Chronicles 16:9

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*³The eyes of the LORD are in every place,
Watching the evil and the good. -
— Proverbs 15:3*

But whereas the emphasis was on Christ for Joshua, here it is on the Holy Spirit's work as it relates to Christ.

¹¹Then I said to him, "What are these two olive trees on the right of the lampstand and on its left?"

¹²And I answered the second time and said to him, "What are the two olive branches which are beside the two golden pipes, which empty the golden oil from themselves?"

¹³So he answered me, saying, "Do you not know what these are?"

And I said, "No, my lord."

¹⁴Then he said, "These are the two anointed ones who are standing by the Lord of the whole earth."

— Zechariah 4:11-14

Liquids typify the work of the Spirit such as water for washing by the Word or oil for anointing. Where the Two Witnesses are concerned, they are Holy Spirit anointed witnesses with a very close relationship to Christ. This is a characteristic which seems to be shared by other biblical pairs who may foreshadow the ultimate Two Witnesses such as the two angels sent to observe Sodom and Gomorrah or Moses and Aaron in their interaction with Pharaoh. They confirm the degree of compliance with God's Word and ways.

It is obvious that we need to prayerfully study Joshua and Zerubbabel to best understand the role of the Two Witnesses of Revelation 11. Most scholars, authors, and website operators see the similarity to Moses and Elijah in terms of the same kind of miracles they both perform, but that seems to fall short of their attachment to Christ and the Holy Spirit as depicted in their closest forerunners in Joshua and Zerubbabel. In fact, Moses and Elijah on the Mt. of Transfiguration are actually more concerned about the First Coming. (Lk. 9:30-31) But our attention to biblical detail is especially important in this Antichrist-influenced environment where people, places, and things may *feel* biblical but are actually counterfeits or significant deviations from the pattern of Scripture.

In Summary

There is no question that the Tribulational Temple is going to be built in our lifetime because its construction, according to previous patterns, has already begun. Considering all the websites, books, and sermons that have been and currently are devoted to the subject of a "third temple", it is amazing how so many details loosely following the pattern of the Second Temple in Ezra are being overlooked. It would seem that attention is only going to be paid when the physical structure goes up when there are so many things which are required to make that happen. The plans have been decided, the materials collected and processed, the priesthood selected and empowered, and the sacrifices reinstated.

But there also seems to be a lack of recognition that this is not going to be an authorized project on God's terms, but from its earliest stages has betrayed itself to be an Antichrist counterfeit. For a short time, ethnic Israel will be satiated by what they think is the proper

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operation of a temple, but the incorporation of Gentile involvement to be followed by the Abomination of Desolation when they realize how deeply they have been betrayed will change the spiritual and political landscape dramatically. Whereas Joshua and Zerubbabel had to intervene to keep the project biblically pure, the Two Witnesses will enter into conflict with the Antichrist and his followers, testifying with confirming signs and miracles as to the truth of the impure counterfeit.

In the meantime, Christians will have to open their eyes to what is taking place and come to recognize that this is not going to be the romanticized facility of Christ's First Coming but a structure that is necessary for the fulfillment of the agenda of the Antichrist and False Prophet. The money they contribute to this facility's construction is not some kind of gift to God or enabling the restoration of Israel to Christ their Messiah; it is a contribution to "*the lawless one*", "*the man of sin*", "*the king of the north*", or most vividly, the Beast. Almost daily there are multiple articles and editorials in the Israeli media about the inevitable "third temple" and in recent elections many more have been elected who are sympathetic to making that happen. Ironically, prophetic fulfillment is already taking place.

In Him,

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