

The Third Temple

– Remarkable Similarities between History and Prophecy –

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Summary

In the book Ezekiel the prophet described the Third Temple in the Messianic time. Many people think that this time would start in the distant future and therefore the Temple is of lesser importance for today. However, the restart of the sacrificial offerings may happen very soon since the original location of the altar and Temple can be reached from the Western Wall without disturbing the Muslim holy places on the Temple Mount.

The following comparison of the history of the Second Temple and the prophecy of the Third Temple may lead to a better understanding of this prophecy.

A world ruler (Cyrus) enabled the restart of the sacrificial offerings and the building of the Second Temple, however, with limited dimensions. A future “Coming Ruler” the ruler of the final form of the Roman Empire (the 10 toes of the fourth kingdom of Nebuchadnezzar’s image) will enable the restart of the offerings when his 7-years treaty with Israel takes effect.

In the time of the Second Temple an interruption of the daily sacrifices and the desecration of the sanctuary were caused by Antiochus. Similarly the Coming Ruler will stop the sacrifices after 3 ½ years and desecrate the sanctuary, which will have been built during the first half of the 7-years treaty.

Judas Maccabeus consecrated the sanctuary and restarted the sacrifices in December 165 B.C.E. In the future the sacrifices will be interrupted for 1290 days (Dan.12:11, according to *Ibn Ezra*, (9)) and will be restarted by the faithful Jews who will be delivered from the attacking world armies 45 days later by the LORD (Dan.12:12; Zec.14:3-9).

The Second Temple was enlarged by Herod. Similarly the Third Temple will be enlarged to the dimensions given in Ez. 40-43 in the beginning of the Messianic kingdom. The wonderful climax of the Temple Prophecy is the return of the Shekinah, the evidence of God’s presence, to the Holiest of Holies in the Third Temple.

Introduction

Many people today have no interest at all in the Third Temple since they are convinced that it belongs to a distant future. However, the Temple question is no taboo anymore.

Israel’s Chief Ashkenazi Rabbi David Lau told the Knesset Channel in June 2016 that he would like to see a Third Temple built, and expressed his belief that the Muslim holy sites located on Haram al-Sharif/Temple Mount need not be demolished in order to make room for it. Asked directly by journalist Nehama Douek whether he would want to see the Jewish Temple rebuilt in the same spot where it was previously located, Rabbi Lau answered, “yes.” *“In that place, by the way, in the same place where it was, there’s room for Jews, there’s room for Christians, there’s room for Muslims, there’s room for everybody,”* Rabbi Lau continued. *“It won’t take up the entire Temple Mount — take a look at its measurements”* (1).

In the seven-year treaty of Oslo, the most difficult problem – Jerusalem – was to be solved in the last year (the year 2000). However, in the future seven-year treaty (Daniel 9:27) this problem will be settled right from the beginning: i.e. the Jewish people will have free access to their most holy place – the original site of the Temple.

It will be shown below that the access to the site of the Sanctuary and the altar is possible from the Western Wall on the original level of the Second Temple, which lies several meters under the current level.

The archeologist Dr. Gabriel Barkay, professor at Bar-Ilan University, mentioned in an interview with Lela Gilbert (2): *"In the Washington DC think tanks surrounding President Bill Clinton, it was understood that the Temple Mount was the crux of the problem of the Middle East conflict. These think tanks decided that if there could be 'split sovereignty' on the Temple Mount, then split sovereignty could also be achieved over the entire land of Palestine. So they suggested that in a future agreement, the Temple Mount would be split horizontally. That is to say that whatever is above ground, the part that includes the shrines of the Muslims, would be under Palestinian sovereignty. Whatever is underground, which would include the remnants of the Temple of the Jews, would be under Israeli sovereignty."*

The Vatican has long since had a vision for free access to the holy places in Jerusalem for the three monotheistic religions. While Moslems and Christians have free access to their holy places, the Jewish people have not. However, Jews and Moslems could never have this access simultaneously if the Holy of Holiest of the Temple was located in the Dome of the Rock. Although the traditional view takes this location for granted, it will be shown below that there are strong arguments against such a location.

The duration of seven years for the future treaty is in accordance with Islamic tradition: *Rasululla (Muhammad) said: "There will be four peace agreements between you and the Romans (Christians). The fourth agreement will be mediated through a person who will be from the progeny of Hadrat Haroon (Honorable Aaron) and will be upheld for seven years (3).* On the other hand – today all Jewish activities near the temple mount (Al-Haram Ash-Sharif) are observed by the Islamic world with strongest suspicion as is shown by the following quotations from the Jerusalem newspaper Haaretz (4):

Eitan's testimony

One of the most fascinating testimonies in the book is that of Eitan. *"As the excavation of the tunnels progressed," says Eitan, "I met with Rabbi Getz almost daily. Together with him, I studied the structure of the Holy Temple and its dimensions. We drew conclusions as to the location of the Holy Temple and the Holy of Holies. When we arrived at the spot that according to our studies was supposed to be the gate through which the priests set out in order to immerse themselves, we assumed that if we made an opening in the wall to the east, we could move forward and eventually reach the Holy of Holies. But we waited for the right time to make the opening. We told no one about it because we preferred to keep the secret to ourselves, so that if - heaven forbid - it were discovered, the responsibility would not fall on the government or its leaders. That is why Begin, who knew about the*

excavations along the Western Wall, did not know about our plans to make the opening to the east."

Eitan reveals that the opening was planned at first for the floor under the level where the excavation to uncover the Western Wall was being carried out at the time, *"and in this way, it was not supposed to be discovered at all. We planned to go in, see the tunnels and move ahead in the direction in which we estimated that the foundations of the Holy of Holies would be found. We were of the view that without heavy tools, using a delicate chisel, we could chip away at the soft limestone walls. We thought that in that way, we could advance quietly and secretly to discover the hiding place where the priests had concealed the Temple artifacts and arrive at the spot just under the Holy of Holies, the place where the Ark of the Covenant was hidden."*

Rabbi Getz also believed that finding the Ark and/or Temple artifacts would serve as a catalyst for the coming of the Messiah. At first, he tried to find the place at which the altar had stood, thousands of years ago. The rabbi had two signs for the location of the site of the altar. The first was that the altar had been placed on level ground. However, the Temple Mount is made up of numerous tunnels, one atop another. If level ground, different from the rest of the surrounding ground, could be found, it would serve as proof of the site of the altar. The second sign was that under the place of the altar, where the sacrifices were brought in the time of the Temple, the floor was made of a mixture of zinc and plaster. *"If even a speck of zinc is found,"* stated the rabbi, *"we will know where the altar stood and that will advance us considerably."*

Immediately after the excavations began, an opening was created and the huge eastward tunnel carved into the rock under the Temple Mount was discovered. Its dimensions were impressive - 28 meters long and six meters wide. The floor of the tunnel was covered with a great deal of water and mud. *"I immediately approached the place and I was seized by an enormous excitement. For a long time I sat, unable to move, with burning tears pouring down my cheeks. I finally gathered up strength and entered. I sat on the steps and said Tikkun Hatzot [midnight prayers] as is our custom."*

The first people brought in on the secret were the then director-general of the Religious Affairs Ministry, Gedalia Schreiber, and the two chief rabbis, Shlomo Goren (1972-83 Chief Ashkenasi Rabbi of Israel) and Ovadia Yosef. Goren was excited by the discovery as was Getz. He viewed the huge tunnels as a primary means to locate the precise location of the Holy of Holies, the area of the Holy Temple to which all but the High Priest on the Day of Atonement were forbidden entry, on pain of death.

In April 1981 I read a short statement in the Jerusalem Post that the location of Holy of Holiest had been found. Therefore, the events described above had taken place in March or April 1981. The Haaretz Article continued under the heading "Mortal danger":

The floor of the tunnel was covered with mud and water, which were removed by hand. The circle of those privy to the secret grew. Among them was Israel Radio reporter Moti Eden who, says Volberstein, participated in the work of uncovering the tunnel. "At night, after my work at the radio station, I came to the

tunnel and using hoes and wheelbarrows, helped with the difficult work of cleaning out the tunnel," recalls Eden, today Channel One's reporter in the north.

Seven weeks after the discovery of the tunnel, news about it was broadcast on Israel Radio. Reporters from all over the world streamed to the site. In late August, on a Friday night, Arabs brought water hoses and very powerful lighting into the tunnel through one of the openings in the floor of the Temple Mount. Getz, who feared the entry of Arabs into the tunnel and the Western Wall plaza, ordered the opening that had been made be boarded up. But just a few hours later, Muslims reentered the tunnel.

Getz was immediately alerted to come to the site from his home in the Jewish Quarter. His wife called students from the Ateret Cohanim yeshiva to come and ran after him. Seeing her husband standing almost all alone facing a group of Arabs holding tools, sticks and hoes, she ran back to the plaza where the worshipers were praying and cried, "Hurry! The rabbi is in mortal danger!" The story ends with the political echelons ordering the opening to the tunnel sealed with reinforced concrete. (Haaretz.com Sunday, May 18, 2003 Iyyar 16, 5763)

Daniel's prophecy

The following study of prophecy is mainly based on the book of Daniel. From the current rabbinical point of view this seems to be wrong, however, the prophecy of Daniel played a major role for the intellectual survival of Judaism in the fourth century.

After three failed attempts to rebuild the Temple in Jerusalem and when Christianity was officially recognised by Constantine, the church claimed to have finally replaced Israel. The rabbinical answer to this wrong claim was based on Daniel's prophecy. Jacob Neusner writes (5): "*We do find repeated references to the four kingdoms: Babylonia, Media, Greece, Rome – and beyond the fourth will come Israel, fifth and last....*

A principle mode of explaining the identification and status of Israel, the Jewish people, involved the periodization of history among four monarchies, as specified by Daniel [i.e. Dan.2&7] (that is, for Leviticus Rabbah, empires signified by various animals in Leviticus 11 and other texts). Rome stands as the penultimate epoch, Israel for the end.

The importance of the Temple is underlined by Neusner (6): "*Everything depended on the Temple, restored or in permanent ruin. Jesus had said, no stone would rest on stone, and none did. Julian had tried to rebuild the Temple and had failed. Chrysostom pointed to the Jew's exile as proof of their defeat...*

No wonder, then, that sages would join the rebuilding of the Temple to the future coming of the Messiah. So the issue framed by Eusebius was carried forward in a logical and cogent way. Sages' response transcended the mere affirmation of the messianic hope. They outlined how to recognize the Messiah and what Israel must do to be worthy of his coming."

In the following we will not deal with the highly controversial question, who is the Messiah. However, we will show that the Temple will be rebuilt and that the Messiah will come about seven years after the restart of the sacrificial offerings on the rebuilt altar in Jerusalem. Using a similar approach as the sages, who saw in the life of the

patriarchs a type of future events, we will show that the history of the Second Temple can be used as a type of future events concerning the Third Temple.

Which comes first, the Messiah or the Temple?

Regarding the Third Temple there are two main opinions found in the Jewish traditions:

- 1) According to RASHI, the future Temple stands in the Heavens fully built, and from there it will descend.
- 2) According to RAMBAM, the future Temple will be build by man of flesh and blood. He quotes a verse from the prophecy of Malachi (3:1) in his classic Letter to Yemen: *"For suddenly the master, whom you are seeking will come to his sanctuary,"* interpreting "the master" (Hebrew: adown) as the Messiah.

RASHI translates and interprets as follows, *the Lord, Whom you seek: The God of justice.* However, since God's day of judgement precedes the Messianic Kingdom of Peace (Zech.14), the sanctuary must be on the earth already during the time of the Nations. Therefore RAMBAM's view seems to be in agreement with Mal.3,1 even when RASHI's interpretation is accepted.

Rabbi Shalom Dov Steinberg in his excellent book on the Third Temple (7) gives a solution to this conflict by quoting Tiferes Yisrael, author of Aruch l'Ner: *The future Temple will certainly be build by man. And regarding the verse, "The Sanctuary, O God, which your hands have established," from which the Midrash Tanmucha learns, that it will descend from Heaven, refers to the spiritual Temple which will descend and become infused in the physical building, like a soul within a body."*

What is the exact location of the Holy Temple?

According to the traditional view the Holy of Holies lies on the rock within the Dome of the Rock. Therefore, even the idea of its rebuilding has become taboo in Israel. Rabbi J. Berman (8) stated that: *„To be 'pro-Temple' in any sense of the term is to be anti-peace. To be pro-Temple is to be religious intolerant, for the Temple could only be rebuilt if the Dome of the Rock were destroyed. To be pro-Temple is to be branded a fundamentalist in an age when fundamentalism is the anathema of the Western world."*

Rabbi S.D. Steinberg (7) discusses different possibilities for the location of the Second Temple and gives important arguments from the Jewish literature to show that the Temple must have been located on a lower level than the Rock inside the Dome of the Rock.

According to archaeological evidence the original level of the Temple Mount at the gates (Barclay Gate, Double/Triple Gate, 725 m above sea level) was 12 m lower than the currently existing court level (737 m). One of the most important arguments for the different Temple location is the level of the water supply. Steinberg quotes an old source: *„How did they rinse the ‚Azarah‘? They uncorked it, and let the water run inside and (remove with its flow all the dirt) leaving it as white as milk“.*

An additional argument is presented by the archeologist Andrews (9). He argues on the basis of quotations from Flavius Josephus, that the original area of Solomon's Temple perimeter (500 x 500 cubits) had been reduced by 60 cubits at the

southern end, when Jerusalem was destroyed with its fortifications including the construction at the south-eastern corner of the Temple side (“Solomon’s stables”). If Andrew is right Zerubavel’s perimeter was 440 x 500 cubits. When Herod enlarged the Temple court he restored the missing 60 cubits in the south and enlarged it mainly in the north so that the area was doubled. The location of the Temple according to (7) is shown in Fig.1.

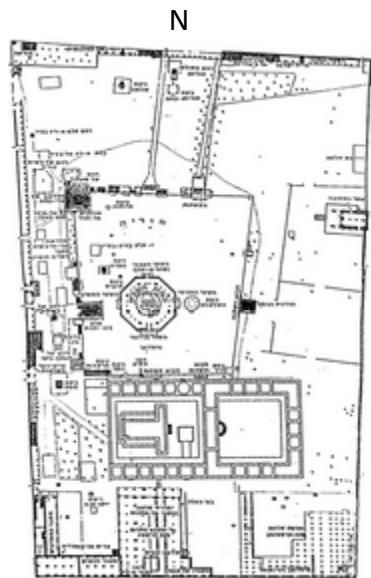


Fig.1 Location of the Second Temple according to Rabbi S.D. Steinberg (7).

In the aerial photo of the Temple mount Fig.2 the Al Aksa Mosque is the building with the gray dome. The Dome of the Rock has a golden dome. In the area between these two Muslim holy places – where trees are growing – was the Holy Temple located according to (7). The empty space above the left part of this area is the plaza before the Western Wall.



Fig. 2 Temple mount from east. Detail from an aerial photo – © BiblePlaces.com

Why was the Second Temple not built according to Ezekiel's pattern?

Rabbi S.D. Steinberg (7) quotes Tosafos Yom Tov with the following explanation: *They knew by prophecy that it was not yet time to build Yechezkel's Temple.*

To understand this prophecy we will start with Daniel's prayer.

70 years after his deportation, Daniel meditated on God's promise to restore the Temple after a period of 70 years. In the following prayer Daniel confessed his sins and the sins of his people and urged God to act without delay:

Dan 9:17&19 *Now therefore, O our God, hear the prayer of thy servant, and his supplications, and cause thy face to shine upon thy sanctuary that is desolate, for the Lord's sake. O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive; O Lord, hearken and do; defer not, for thine own sake, O my God: for thy city and thy people are called by thy name.*

His main concern was the full restoration of the Temple, which would include the return of the Shechinah, the cloud of the Divine presence. However, this was not in keeping with God's long term plan for the Temple. Therefore God sent his angel Gabriel to instruct His beloved servant Daniel. Gabriel explained to Daniel that it would take 70 times 7 years until the most Holy would be anointed:

Dan 9:24 *Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy.*

„This refers to the Third Temple, which, in contradistinction to the Second Temple, will be anointed. The sages (Yoma 21b) tell us that the Second Temple, which had not been anointed (Tosefta Sotah 13:2) lacked five things, among them Shechinah, the evident Presence of God. But the third Temple will be anointed, therefore, in comparison to the second, it will be a holy of the holies (Malbim“) (10).

Additionally the following prophecy shows that the Second Temple would be destroyed together with the city of Jerusalem.

Dan 9:26b *and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary;*

We understand, therefore, that Ezra and the Jews, who had returned from Babylon knew, that the Temple, which they were allowed to build was not the Temple described by Ezekiel.

Remarkable similarities between the Second and the Third Temple

The study of the history of the Second Temple in comparison to prophetic scriptures on the Third Temple reveals some remarkable similarities. In the Table these similarities (or

differences) are shown. The numbers in the right column lead to the corresponding explanations in the following text.

Table: Sacrificial offerings and rebuilding of the Temple in Jerusalem
Comparison between the Second and the Third Temple

	Second Temple	Third Temple
Command of world ruler	Cyrus (Ezra 1:1-4; 6,3-5), height & width limited to 60 cubits (ca.30m)	Coming Prince (Dan.7:19-26; 9:27) Reconstruction may at first be limited to inner sanctuary only 1)
Sacrificial offering without Temple	Roughly 20 years only with altar (Ezra 3:3+6; 6:15-16)	Possibly only with altar in 1 st half of last 7 years of the 70 weeks of years (Dan. 9:24+27) 2)
Rebuilding of the Temple	Weeping, probably because only the inner sanctuary was reconstructed (Ezra 3:12)	Probably only the inner sanctuary between Dome of Rock & Al Aksa Mosque, 3)
Interruption of sacrifices and desecration of the sanctuary	By Antiochus Epiphanes for 2300 evenings & mornings (“Little Horn” from 3 rd Kingdom, Dan. 8:13-14)	By the Coming Prince/”Little Horn” from end of 4 th Kingdom for 3 ½ years (Dan. 7:25; 9:27; 12:7) 4)
Consecration of the sanctuary and restart of sacrifices	By Judas Maccabeus: Dec. 25, 165 B.C.E.	By faithful Jews (Dan. 12:11) 1290 days after desecration of sanctuary – 45 days later deliverance by the Lord (Dan.7:26-27; Zec.14:3-9) 5)
Enlargement of the Temple	By Herod (see Josephus)	Completion by Messiah (Ez.40-42) 6)
Return of Shekinah	_____	Ez.43:1-9 Fulfilment of Daniel’s prayer (Dan.9:17) 7)

Explanation of the Table

1) The Coming Prince

Dan 9:26b *the people of **the prince that shall come** shall destroy the city and the sanctuary;*

This prince is introduced here without further explanation since he was already described in chapter 7 as the “little horn”:

Dan 7:7-8 *After this I saw in the night visions, and behold a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth: it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it: and it [was] diverse from all the beasts that [were] before it; and it had ten horns. I considered the horns, and, behold, there came up among them another **little horn**, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the*

roots: and, behold, in this **horn** [were] eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things.

Dan 7:19-25 *Then I would know the truth of the fourth beast, which was diverse from all the others, exceeding dreadful, whose teeth [were of] iron, and his nails [of] brass; [which] devoured, brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with his feet;*

*And of the ten horns that [were] in his head, and [of] **the other** which came up, and before whom three fell; even [of] that **horn** that had eyes, and a mouth that spoke very great things, whose look [was] more stout than his fellows.*

*I beheld, and the same **horn** made war with the saints, and prevailed against them;*

Until the Ancient of days came, and judgement was given to the saints of the most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom.

*Thus he said, The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth, which shall be diverse from all kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, and shall tread it down, and break it in pieces. And the ten horns out of this kingdom [are] ten kings [that] shall arise: and another shall rise after them; and **he (the little horn)** shall be diverse from the first, and **he** shall subdue three kings. **He** shall speak [great] words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until **a time and times and the dividing of time.***

In the final phase of the fourth kingdom (Rome) the “Coming Prince” alias the “Little Horn” shall have power to wear out the saints of the Most High for “a time and times and the dividing of time” i.e. 3 ½ years. This most terrible time will be ended by the divine judgement at the beginning of the Messianic Kingdom.

However, seven years before the beginning of the Messianic Kingdom the “Coming Prince” will appear as the greatest friend of the Jewish people. Similar to the command of Cyrus, which enabled the restart of the sacrifices, he will enable the sacrificial offerings at the original site of the altar in Jerusalem in the frame of a seven-year treaty.

This seven-year period is mentioned as “one week” in Dan.9:27:

Dan 9:27a *And **he** shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease...*

He – the Coming Prince – shall make a seven-year treaty (the same duration as the Oslo treaty!) with many – or with the great ones of Israel (Rashi). In this treaty – in contrast to that of Oslo – the “Jerusalem problem” will be settled right from the beginning and the Jewish people will have free access to their most sacred place, the original location of the Holy Temple and the altar. The sacrificial offerings will be restarted at the beginning of this future seven-year treaty.

In the middle of the week of seven years i.e. after 3½ years the Coming Prince will interrupt the sacrifice. This implies that the sacrifices started with the beginning of the covenant. At the same time when the sacrifices are stopped the Third Temple, which was built in the meantime, will be desecrated by the Coming Prince.

2) The 70 weeks of years and the last 7 years

Dan 9:24a **Seventy weeks** are determined upon thy people...

Seder Olam (ch.28) and all the commentators, especially Ibn Ezra, interpret "seventy weeks" to mean 490 years: seventy weeks of years (10).

Daniel was informed by Gabriel that the 70x7 years would be divided in 7x7 + 62x7 + 7 years. However, before the beginning of the last 7 years, the sanctuary (Second Temple) and the city (Jerusalem) would be destroyed:

Dan 9:25-26 *Know therefore and understand, [that] from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince [shall be] seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof [shall be] with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined.*

The starting point of the 70x7 years is the command to restore Jerusalem (Neh. 2); the process of rebuilding would take 7x7 years and after additional 62x7 years Messiah would be cut off. After this event the destruction of Jerusalem and the sanctuary by Titus is a known historic event, the following period of war and desolation is left undefined.

„According to Ibn Ezra's interpretation of the seventy weeks, this last week of the seventy was not included in the sixty-two weeks mentioned before. In order to arrive at a total of seventy weeks, the last week spoken of here has to be added to the sum of the seven weeks in Dan.9:25 and the 62 in v. 26..."(10).

From this interpretation it follows that the last 7 years of the total period of the 70 x 7 years, which are decreed for Daniel's people and the Holy City (Dan.9:25), lie still in the future. These 7 years are mentioned in the next verse of Dan.9 as "one week":

Dan 9:27a *And he shall confirm the covenant with many for **one week**.*

From the book of Ezra we learn that for the restart of the sacrifices only the altar is necessary:

Ezr 3:3 *And they set the altar upon his bases; for fear [was] upon them because of the people of those countries: and they offered burnt offerings thereon unto the LORD, [even] burnt offerings morning and evening.*

Ezr 3:6 *From the first day of the seventh month began they to offer burnt offerings unto the LORD. But the foundation of the temple of the LORD was not [yet] laid.*

It is probable therefore that the sacrifices will be started before the Third Temple is built. This view is in accordance with the description of the “cleansing” of the altar in Ezekiel *in the day when they shall make it:*

Ez 43:18 *And he said unto me, Son of man, thus saith the Lord GOD; These [are] the ordinances of the altar in the day when they shall make it, to offer burnt offerings thereon, and to sprinkle blood thereon.*

This cleansing of the altar is distinguished from the cleansing of the Sanctuary:

Ez 45:18 *Thus saith the Lord GOD; In the first [month], in the first [day] of the month, thou shalt take a young bullock without blemish, and cleanse the sanctuary.*

3) First building stage of the Second Temple: Only the inner sanctuary

After the Babylonian captivity Cyrus commanded the building of the Second Temple, however, with restrictions:

Ezr 6:3 *In the first year of Cyrus the king [the same] Cyrus the king made a decree [concerning] the house of God at Jerusalem, Let the house be builded, the place where they offered sacrifices, and let the foundations thereof be strongly laid; the height thereof threescore cubits, [and] the breadth thereof threescore cubits;*

Probably because of these restrictions the elderly people wept when the foundations of the Second Temple were laid. The Coming Prince will probably give similar restrictions for the construction of the Third Temple.

4) Interruption of sacrifices and desecration of the sanctuary

Dan 9:27b *and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease*

In the midst of the week i.e. after 3 ½ years the Coming Prince will stop the sacrificial offerings similar to Antiochus Epiphanes, the “Little Horn from the 3rd kingdom (Greece):

Dan 8:9 *And out of one of them came forth a **little horn**, which waxed exceeding great, toward the south, and toward the east, and toward the pleasant [land].*

Dan 8:11 *Yea, he (Antiochus Epiphanes) magnified [himself] even to the prince of the host, and by him the daily [sacrifice] was taken away, and the place of his sanctuary was cast down.*

Dan 8:13 *Then I heard one saint speaking, and another saint said unto that certain [saint] which spake, How long [shall be] the vision [concerning] the daily [sacrifice], and the transgression of desolation, to give both the sanctuary and the host to be trodden under foot?*

Dan 8:14 *And he said unto me, Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed.*

In the future the Coming Prince will act similar to Antiochus Epiphanes. He will not only stop the sacrifices but also set up the abomination and thereby desecrate the sanctuary:

Dan 12:11 *And from the time [that] the daily [sacrifice] shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, [there shall be] a thousand two hundred and ninety days.*

During these 1290 days or 3 ½ years there will be the most terrible time of trouble:

Dan 12:1b *and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation [even] to that same time:*

Dan 12:7a *And I heard the man clothed in linen, which [was] upon the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand unto heaven, and swore by him that liveth for ever that [it shall be] for a time, times, and an half;*

5) Consecration of the sanctuary and restart of sacrificial offerings

Near the end of this most terrible time the faithful Jewish remnant will consecrate the sanctuary and restart the sacrifices.

Similar to Antiochus' reaction to the rededication of the Second Temple by Judas Maccabeus the "Coming Prince" will be furious when the faithful Jewish remnant will re-consecrate the sanctuary and restart the interrupted daily sacrifice after 1290 days. He will gather the armies of the nations against Jerusalem. During this time the daily sacrifice will be offered again (12) for 45 days within the Holy City.

The heavenly point of view is given in Daniel 7 where we are told that after his dominion for 3 ½ years the divine judgement of the Coming Prince follows:

Dan 7:26-27 *But the judgement shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy [it] unto the end. And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom [is] an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him.*

The deliverance of the faithful Jewish remnant and the last battle before the Messianic Kingdom is described in Zechariah:

Zech 14:2-5 *For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city. Then shall the LORD go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle. And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which [is] before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, [and there shall be] a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south. And ye shall*

flee [to] the valley of the mountains; for the valley of the mountains shall reach unto Azal: yea, ye shall flee, like as ye fled from before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah: and the LORD my God shall come, [and] all the saints with thee.

Zech 14:9 *And the LORD shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one LORD, and his name one.*

This last battle before the Messianic Kingdom is also described in Is.63:1-6; Ez.39:17ff; Rev. 14:12-16 and 19:11-21.

6) Enlargement and Completion of the Third Temple

The first stage of the Third Temple will probably be built under severe restrictions as explained in section 3). During his last 3½ years of dominion the Coming Prince will probably enlarge the Sanctuary similar to Herod. However, it is an open question, how much of the enlargement will be done by the Coming Prince. The huge building of the Third Temple as described in the last chapters of Ezekiel will be erected during the Messianic Kingdom.

An open entrance from the East will be added to the underground entrance from the Western Wall. A part or all of the underground structure of the Sanctuary will be opened and enlarged by outer courtyards north, east, and west of the Sanctuary.

The northern and western courtyards will be elevated above the eastern courtyard, which is in level with the original ground level of the altar east of the Sanctuary. The two different levels of the courtyard pavements (Hebrew: ritspah) are mentioned in Ezekiel:

Ez 40:17-18 *Then brought he me into the outward court, and, lo, [there were] chambers, and a pavement made for the court round about: thirty chambers [were] upon the pavement. And the pavement by the side of the gates over against the length of the gates [was] the lower pavement.*

A detailed and very helpful description of the Third Temple is given in the ArtScroll Tanach Series on Ezekiel (11) and in Rabbi Steinberg's excellent book (7). However, in contrast to the above interpretation there the two levels of the courtyard pavements are interpreted as "balconies". However, this is not necessary, since *according to archaeological evidence the original level of the Temple Mount ... was 12 m lower than the currently existing court level (737 m) (7)*. Therefore, the paved courtyard may have two different levels.

7) Return of Shekinah

When Daniel prayed for the fulfilment of God's promise without delay he hoped for the return of the Shekinah to the rebuilt Second Temple. The angelic answer told him that the anointing of the most holy would take place not after 70 years but after 70 x 7 years: Dan 9:24 **Seventy weeks** *are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make*

*reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and **to anoint the most Holy.***

After Ezekiel had described the step by step departure of the Shekinah from the First Temple he was selected to see prophetically the wonderful event of the return of the Shekinah to the Third Temple:

Ez 43:1-2 *Afterward he brought me to the gate, [even] the gate that looketh toward the east:*

And, behold, the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the east: and his voice [was] like a noise of many waters: and the earth shined with his glory.

Ez 43:4-5 *And **the glory of the LORD came into the house** by the way of the gate whose prospect [is] toward the east. So the spirit took me up, and brought me into the inner court; and, behold, **the glory of the LORD filled the house.***

The concluding word of this marvellous prophetic book is the new name of Jerusalem:

HASHEM-IS-THERE

ADONAI SHAMAH

Conclusion

Daniel's main concern in his prayer was the full restoration of the Temple, which would include the return of the Shekinah, the evidence of God's presence in the Temple. But the divine plan for the Second Temple was different. To Daniel the future history of the Second Temple till its destruction was revealed as well as the restart of the sacrificial offerings. However, the angelic message to Daniel included the anointing of the Most Holy:

Dan 9:24 *Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, ...**and to anoint the most Holy.***

„This refers to the Third Temple, which, in contradistinction to the Second Temple, will be anointed.” (10).

The Shekinah will return to the Third Temple at the beginning of the Messianic era. To Ezekiel the tragic event of the departure of the Shekinah from the First Temple was revealed. And to him was given a prophetic view of the Messianic Kingdom, including a detailed description of the Third Temple and the return of the Shekinah. However, there seems to be one exception, the cleansing of the altar, which is to be performed “in the day when they shall make it” (Ez.43:18-22). The altar is necessary to restart the sacrificial offerings, which will be started at the beginning of the future seven-year treaty between the Coming Master Diplomat and Israel. This coming ruler will forcefully stop the sacrificial offerings in the middle of these last seven years (Dan.9,:27) before the coming of the Messiah.

This is the beginning of the darkest time of trouble in all history (Dan.12: 1): *“The tribulation of the generation of the Messiah described in Sanhedrin 97b” (10).*

The duration of this tribulation is limited to 3½ years (Dan.7:25 & 12:7). In Verse 12 Daniel was told: “Blessed [is] he that waiteth, and cometh to 1335 days.” – “Verse 12

refers to the length of time allowed for the time of trouble mentioned above (v.1)... Here the angle was more precise and gave the exact amount of days" (10).

This tribulation will end with the divine judgement for Israel's enemies and followed by the Messianic Kingdom.

Dan 7:25b-27 *and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time.*

But the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy [it] unto the end. And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom [is] an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him.

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- 11) At that time the faithful Jews will end the United Nations control over the Old City (see No.3), similar to the end of Greek rule in the year 165 B.C.E. They will cleanse the whole Temple Mount. This will probably induce the preparation for a universal Jihad of all Muslims, who will fight for the control of Jerusalem in concurrence to the Coming Prince. During the preparation for the final battle the Holy City seems to be described in Psalm 46:

God [is] our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; [Though] the waters thereof roar [and] be troubled, [though] the mountains shake with the swelling thereof. Selah.

[There is] a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy [place] of the tabernacles of the most High. God [is] in the midst of her; she shall not be moved: God shall help her [and that] right early. The heathen raged, the kingdoms were moved: he uttered his voice, the earth melted. The LORD of hosts [is] with us; the God of Jacob [is] our refuge. Selah.

Come behold the works of the LORD, what desolations he hath made in the earth. He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth; he breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder; he burneth the chariot in the fire. Be still, and know that I [am] God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth. The LORD of hosts [is] with us; the God of Jacob [is] our refuge. Selah.