

Does YHWH Require a Future Temple Building? Part 2

Part 2

- The Implications of a future Temple
- The temple described in Ezekiel
- Contentious verses within Scripture

The Implications of a Future Temple

It was explained in Part 1 how, through His sacrifice, Yahusha Mashiach has built a spiritual house of believers thereby eliminating the need for a physical temple building. To construct a future temple structure would be to return to the pre-Yahusha period and that is impossible, YHWH cannot undo what Yahusha's sacrifice accomplished and why should He wish to undermine that which He orchestrated and ordained, (John 5:30)?

The construction of a future temple would constitute derogation of Mashiach Yahusha's sacrifice and atonement. However, this is not a problem for those who deny Yahusha and as said in the introduction to this article, the orthodox Jews believe a temple structure is a pre-requisite for Mashiach to come, (Not return, the orthodox Jews do not accept it was Mashiach who walked the earth 2000 years ago). Consequently, they are determined to construct a third temple. In the Amidah prayer recited daily, the orthodox Jews request YHWH to bless the building of a third temple. Furthermore, 2 Thessalonians implies that a temple will be in existence at the end of this age,

Let no one deceive you in any way, because the falling away is to come first, and the man of lawlessness is to be revealed, the son of destruction, who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called god or that is worshipped, so that he sits as god in the temple of god, showing himself that he is god. (2Thess.2:3-4).

Clearly a temple structure of some description will be in existence when Yahusha Mashiach returns but it will not be YHWH's temple. Its sole purpose will be to facilitate the false messiah and all that is prophesied concerning him. For the false messiah to succeed in his deceit he will be Jewish and willingly accept his temple, thereby guaranteeing the allegiance of the orthodox fraternity and fulfilling the 'falling away' prophesied in the above passage. This third and pagan temple will be destroyed by YHWH with the outpouring of His wrath upon the earth at the end of this age.

But we cannot ignore the temple described to the prophet Ezekiel, after all, this temple was instructed by YHWH and was never built therefore many believe it remains a future prospect.

The temple described in Ezekiel

As mentioned in Part 1 it is questionable whether or not a temple of such a magnitude will fit on the existing temple mount, if not we are talking about a millennial temple and that presents problems.

The design of the temple described to Ezekiel contains both a 'Holy Place' and a 'Most Holy Place,' (Ezek.41:4) where the Ark of the Covenant was situated, such a provision conflicts with the millennial environment described in Jeremiah,

"See, the days are coming," declares YHWH, "when I shall make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, not like the covenant I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Mitsrayim, My covenant which they broke, though I was a husband to them," declares YHWH. "For this is the covenant I shall make with the house of Israel after those days, declares YHWH: I shall put My Torah in their inward parts, and write it on their hearts. And I shall be their Elohim, and they shall be My people. (Jer.31:31-33).

“Return, O backsliding children,” declares YHWH, “for I shall rule over you, and shall take you, one from a city and two from a family, and shall bring you to Tziyon. And I shall give you shepherds according to My heart, and they shall feed you with knowledge and understanding. And it shall be, when you have increased, and shall bear fruit in the land in those days, declares YHWH, “That they no longer say, ‘The ark of the covenant of YHWH.’ Neither would it come to heart, nor would they remember it, nor would they visit it, nor would it be made again. (Jer.3:14-16)

If there is no ‘ark of the covenant’ then there is nowhere for YHWH’s glory to sit and the ‘Most Holy Place’ of Ezekiel’s temple is going to be empty. There are two reasons the ‘ark of the covenant’ is no longer necessary: firstly there is nothing to put in it – stone tablets are no longer necessary for a people who have YHWH’s Torah written on their hearts. Secondly the ‘ark of the covenant’ was YHWH’s throne, it was His glory seat and as was explained in Part 1 YHWH will carve for Himself a millennial throne within the new mountains above Yerushalayim. Furthermore, YHWH says He will walk amongst His people (2Cor.6:16), it will be the visible YHWH in the millennium just as it was in the first ‘Garden.’

It was explained in Part 1 how in the millennium the Land will constitute a holy environment populated with a totally righteous people (Isa.60:21). Yet the temple described to Ezekiel has provision for sin and guilt offerings (Ezek.40:39, 42:13, 43:19-22), a superfluous requirement in a holy environment. Let us revisit a passage from Ezekiel,

*And I shall take you from among the gentiles, and I shall gather you out of all lands, and I shall bring you into your own land. And I shall sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean – from all your uncleanness and from all your idols I cleanse you. And I shall give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you. And I shall take the heart of stone out of your flesh, and I shall give you a heart of flesh, **I will put My spirit inside you and cause you to live by My laws, respect My rulings and obey them,** (Ezek36:24-27).*

A lot was said about this passage in Part 1, so here we can concentrate on verse 27 where YHWH says those living in the Land in the millennium will have His spirit inside them! Don’t those who are in the ‘Body of Mashiach’ and destined for the Land already have the Ruach HaKodesh (Holy Spirit) within them and live by His Torah? Clearly, there must be more to this verse than is first realized. As was said in Part 1, I believe the verse is referring to the difficulty of the flesh and the constant spiritual battle every believer endures and because we have endured, YHWH is going to take this battle away from us. What we are to receive is a greater fullness of His spirit, the result of which is a wholly righteous person. Ironically Ezekiel himself confirms that the people living in the Land will be sinless,

*Neither shall they defile themselves any more with their idols, nor with their detestable things, **nor with any of their transgressions:** but I will save them out of all their dwelling places, wherein they have sinned, and will cleanse them: so shall they be my people, and I will be their Elohim. And David my servant shall be king over them; and they all shall have one shepherd (Mashiach): **they shall also walk in my judgments, and observe my statutes, and do them.** And they shall dwell in the land that I have given unto Ya’akov my servant, wherein your fathers have dwelt; and they shall dwell therein, even they, and their children, and their children’s children for ever: and my servant David shall be their prince for ever. with them: and I will place them, and multiply them, and will set my sanctuary in the midst of them for evermore. (Ezek.37:23-26).*

The above passage shows complete correlation with Part 1 of this article, portraying a totally righteous people living in the Land. The highlights amounting to Ezekiel’s own admission that the temple he was given with its provision for sin offerings was never meant for the millennium. Not only would such a temple totally undermine Mashiach’s sacrifice but also make the writer of Hebrews a liar,

But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of Elohim. From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool. For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified. The Holy Spirit also assures us of this, for he

said: "This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, declares YHWH, "I will put my laws in their hearts and will write them on their minds, and I will never again remember their sins and their lawless deeds." Now where there is forgiveness of these sins, there is no longer any offering for sin. (Heb.10:12-18).

How can YHWH say He will never again remember their sins if they continue to sin. Now let us examine some verses from chapter 43 in Ezekiel,

So the spirit took me up, and brought me into the inner court; and, behold, the glory of YHWH filled the house. And I heard him speaking unto me out of the house; and the man stood by me. And he said unto me, Son of man, the place of my throne, and the place of the soles of my feet, where I will dwell in the midst of the children of Israel for ever, and my holy name, shall the house of Israel no more defile, neither they, nor their kings, by their whoredom, nor by the carcasses of their kings in their high places. (Ezek.43:5-7)

Now let them put away their whoredom, and the carcasses of their kings, far from me, and I will dwell in the midst of them for ever. You son of man, show the house to the house of Israel, that they may be ashamed of their iniquities: and let them measure the pattern. (Ezek.43:9-10)

And since they shall be ashamed of all that they did, make known to them the design of the House and its structure, and its exits and its entrances, its entire design and all its laws, and all its forms and all its ordinances. And write it down before their eyes, so that they observe its entire design and all its laws, and shall do them. (Ezek.43:11).

One cannot argue that the above passages are talking about a temple structure but clearly the closing statement to verse 11 prohibits any interpretation that this temple is for a future, far of age? The verse is clear: YHWH means for the prophet to show the temple design to the people of that day so they may build it. It should be remembered that Ezekiel lived during the Babylonian exile of the Israelites. Thus he lived before the reconstruction of either the city of Yerushalayim or the second temple. This fact is most pertinent when considering the above verse: clearly YHWH intended for the reconstruction of the city and temple to follow the plans He had just given to the prophet. It makes no sense to think otherwise. Nowhere does Scripture lead us to believe that Ezekiel is going to return at the end of this age with a temple design given to him thousands of years earlier. If this was YHWH's intention and given that a second temple was envisaged, surely YHWH would have instructed the prophet to conceal not reveal the plans He had given to him and run the risk of the millennial temple being built prematurely. Indeed, having given Daniel information meant for a future generation, YHWH instructed the information to be sealed up. Surely the gospels and the apostolic Scriptures would have commented on such a prominent feature as a future physical temple! The silence shouts loud.

What happened to these plans and why wasn't the design adhered to, why wasn't the second temple built to this design? It is clear from verses 11 that the offer of a temple was conditional '*they shall be ashamed of all that they did,*' it was reliant on the people showing a repentant attitude. That this temple was never built is evidence that the people did not listen to the prophet's message. It was almost a generation after Ezekiel when the people returned to the Land, had by this time, the plans gone to the grave along with the prophet?

A further anomaly occurs in chapter 45 verse 7 of Ezekiel which refers to a prince who is awarded a portion of the city. Who is to be this millennial prince? There are verses which designate Mashiach as prince but it makes no sense to allot what is said in this verse to Mashiach because YHWH claims the whole of the city as His throne room (Jer.3:17).

Finally, Ezekiel's temple is associated with a Levitical (obsolete) priesthood (Ezek.43:19). Clearly, it is inconsistent to believe in Mashiach's sacrifice, accept what is written in Hebrews (10:12-18) and believe in a future temple which has facilities made obsolete by Yahusha HaMashiach.

Whilst there are prophetic passages within Ezekiel it is incoherent to view the whole of Ezekiel with an eschatological eye and most assuredly those verses concerning a temple and the rebuilding of the city. Insofar as the temple is concerned such a view is based on what is not written which is the very antithesis of exegesis. There is nothing in Ezekiel to encourage its reader to adopt a belief that the temple described is meant for a far off age. Indeed it is clear from a careful examination Ezekiel proves the opposite to be true.

Some Contentious Verses

Notwithstanding all we have said there are several scriptures, which would appear to support a future temple construction and so we need to examine what is said. Look at the following two passages: one from Isaiah and one from Zachariah,

And it shall be in the latter days that the mountain of the House (Bayith) of YHWH is established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills. And all nations shall flow to it. And many peoples shall come and say, "Come, and let us go up to the mountain of YHWH, to the House (Bayith) of the Elohim of Ya'akov, and let Him teach us His ways, and let us walk in His paths, for out of Tziyon comes forth the Torah, and the Word of YHWH from Yerushalayim. (Isa.2:2-3).

Therefore thus said YHWH, "I shall return to Yerushalayim with compassion. My house (Bayith) shall be built in it," declares YHWH of hosts, "and a surveyor's line be stretched out over Yerushalayim." (Zech.1:16).

The issue is how should we to interpret the Hebrew (*Bayith*) translated house in both passages? Scripture uses the word in several ways; to describe a dwelling place (home, temple, even a prison), a particular household or collection of people such as a family, tribe or lineage; the house of Ya'akov or the house of David etc. Brown Driver Briggs provides an extensive definition for (*Bayith*),

- A place - house, home, temple receptacle
- Household, family
- Dynasty
- Those belonging to the same household
- Family of descendants, descendants as organized body = The house of David/Israel
- Household affairs
- Inwards (metaphorically), on the inside, within

Bayith is Strong's H1004 and is from H1129 which means to obtain children thus supporting the family concept where *Bayith* is used. Furthermore, out of 86 times temple is referred to 80 times (93%) *Heykal* is used and only 6 times (7%) *Bayith* is used. This being the case we may interpret the above verse from Isaiah in the following manner?

And it shall be in the latter days that the mountain of the people of YHWH (the place the people of YHWH consider is sanctified) is established on the top of the mountains, (YHWH's throne is carved into the highest and most prominent mountain, En.24:8) and shall be exalted above the hills. And all nations shall flow to it. And many peoples shall come and say, "Come, and let us go up to the mountain of YHWH, to gather with the family/people/household of the Elohim of Ya'akov, and let Him teach us His ways, and let us walk in His paths, for out of Tziyon comes forth the Torah, and the Word of YHWH from Yerushalayim. (Isa.2:2-3).

Similarly the passage from Zechariah would more accurately reflect the future situation had it been translated in the following way,

Therefore thus said YHWH, "I shall return to Yerushalayim with compassion. My family shall be built in it," declares YHWH of hosts, "and a surveyor's line be stretched out over Yerushalayim." (Zech.1:16).

Credence for the above reconstruction of Isa.2:2-3 and Zech.1:16 can be found in YHWH's statement to the prophet Hosea, where He uses the term house in exactly the same context as proposed above,

Set the trumpet to your mouth. He shall come as an eagle against the house (Bayith) of YHWH, because they have transgressed my covenant, and trespassed against my law. (Hos.8:1).

So 'house' can mean not only a dwelling place but home, household, family, tribe, dynasty and temple. In fact 'house of' followed by another noun is so idiomatic in Hebrew that there are over 200 idioms which begin 'house of.' Now let us look at a further verse of contention,

And they shall bring all your brethren as an offering to YHWH out of all nations, on horses, and in chariots, and in litters, and upon mules, and upon swift beasts, to my holy mountain Yerushalayim, declares YHWH as the children of Israel bring an offering in a clean vessel into the house (Bayith) of YHWH. (Isa.66:20).

Personally I find this verse somewhat muddled: first we are told that YHWH's people are themselves an offering then we are told the people bring an offering, thus with the above translation we have an offering from an offering. But it is the latter half of the above translation that is most problematic for us,

'...as the children of Israel bring (H935) an offering in a clean (H2889) vessel (H3627) into the house of YHWH'.

Whilst this section of the verse appears troublesome we must not interpret a single isolated verse so as to create contradiction with the cumulative effect of many other verses. Scripture is not contradictory; contradiction is usually the result of poor translation or a lack of contextual application by the reader. This said; let us examine the above section of Isaiah 66:20 from a Hebraic perspective,

- 'Bring:' Strong's H935 is the Hebrew (*Bo*) and can mean to come, go or enter.
- 'Clean:' Strong's H2889 is the Hebrew (*tahor*) and can mean pure.
- 'Vessel:' Strong's H3627 is the Hebrew (*k'liy*) and can mean article or object.

Considering the earlier analysis of the Hebrew (*Bayith*) Isaiah 66:20 could legitimately read,

And they shall bring all your brethren (the remnant of Israel) as an offering to YHWH out of all nations, on horses, and in chariots, and in litters, and upon mules, and upon swift beasts, to my holy mountain Yerushalayim, declares YHWH as the children of Israel, the house (family) of YHWH come themselves a pure offering,. (Isa.66:20).

Once again this new rendering removes all conflict with the earlier verses and removes the ambiguity within the verse itself. Now let us take a final verse from Isaiah,

Even them (the stranger, the Eunuch) will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house (Bayith) of prayer: their burnt offerings and their sacrifices (Bayith) shall be accepted upon my altar; for my house (Bayith) shall be called a house (Bayith) of prayer for all people. (Isa.56:7).

Again this verse at first appears very troublesome. The verse seems to positively suggest the existence of a temple. However, if we accept that this verse is referring to the millennium period then we must consider it in terms of Mashiach. As we have said, Mashiach removed the separation between YHWH and His creation and restored the divine spiritual element of worship, thus removing the need for a temple system. Aligning with Mashiach's words in John 2:19, the apostolic Scriptures say the following,

Through Him then, let us continually offer up the sacrifices of praise to Elohim, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His Name. (Heb.13:15).

You also, as living stones, are being built up, a spiritual house, (body of people) a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual (not animal) sacrifices acceptable to Elohim through Yahusha Mashiach. (1Pet.2:5).

Speaking specifically of Mashiach's body of believers the writer of Hebrews says,

For this One has been counted worthy of more glory than Moshe, inasmuch as He who built the house has more honour than the house. For every house is built by someone, but He who built all things is Yah. And Moshe indeed was faithful in all His house as a servant, for a testimony of those things which would be spoken afterward, but Messiah as a Son over His own house, whose house we are if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm to the end. (Heb.3:3-6).

So considering the above, how are we to understand Isaiah 56:7 today? When we examine the preceding verses in this chapter of Isaiah, it is clear that the real issue under discussion is one of caste. YHWH is dealing with the attitude of superiority instituted by the Jewish people over the foreigners living amongst them. Using the metaphor of the established worship practices followed at that time, YHWH is explaining the neutrality of class and that the Torah observant foreigner is equally acceptable as is the Israelite. In my view the verse is meant to overcome on the one hand, a Jewish sense of superiority due to the conviction that, they alone by special favour, were the inheritors of the venerable promises and on the other hand, the inferiority effect this attitude had on the foreigners living amongst them.

It is probable that the apostle had Isaiah chapter 56 in mind when he wrote his epistle to the congregation in Rome, in which he consistently emphasized the neutrality of the 'body of Mashiach' using his own metaphor of circumcision and uncircumcision. Just as with Isaiah the apostle makes it clear that all have access to YHWH but now it is through Mashiach. Continuing with Isaiah 56:7 let us examine some other phrases in the verse,

'House of Prayer'- YHWH's desire is to be worshipped which we do through prayer (offering of our lips). Thus the body of Mashiach which is open to every race and creed is a literal house of prayer.

'Burnt Offerings'- When we realise the issue is concerning equality and YHWH is affirming that the foreigner's worship is equally acceptable to him, it is clear this phrase is merely a euphemism for worship.

It is important that we read the whole of Scripture as one book and without confliction. It is essential today for us to read the Scriptures in terms of Mashiach and cognizant of how He transformed worship. In consideration of what we have said, we can now present the following alternative for Isaiah 56:7,

Even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my household/ family: their worship and prayers shall be accepted by Me; for my household shall be called a household for all people.

There is also a verse in Zechariah that parallels the passage from Isaiah 57 above,

²⁰In that day shall there be upon the bells of the horses, HOLINESS UNTO YHWH; and the pots in YHWH's house shall be like the bowls before the altar. ²¹Yes, every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah shall be holy unto YHWH of hosts: and all they that sacrifice (bring offerings) shall come and take of them, and use them: and in that day there shall be no more the Canaanite in the house of YHWH of hosts. (Zech.14:20-21)

Much of what has been said about the Isaiah verse is applicable here. However, insofar as this verse is concerned it is important not to read verse 20 in isolation from verse 21: every pot in the city will be sanctified thus verse 20 cannot be referring only to the utensils in a temple building. In consideration of verse 21, verse 20 is merely confirming that because in the millennium, the whole of YHWH's household will be holy, all of their utensils will

be considered just as holy as those used by the temple priests. Verse 21 is merely an amplification of this claim. Furthermore the passage cannot be referring to a temple structure because of the statement that a Canaanite will no longer be present in the house of YHWH. When was a Canaanite ever allowed in the temple?

Amplifying what was said earlier, in the **post Mashiach era** it is essential to a correct exegesis for the Tanakh (Old Testament) to be understood in terms of Mashiach and interpreted to align with all Mashiach and the apostles have said. As demonstrated above it does not take much effort to achieve this alignment.

To hammer home the importance of a correct translation and interpretation, we can examine Revelation which talks of a heavenly temple (discussed in Part 4), an alter and an Ark of the Covenant. Do these comments infer a physical temple in heaven with an alter for blood and grain offerings? Are we to believe that YHWH resides over an Ark of the Covenant in a 'Most holy' room separated from the heavenly host? John describes YHWH sitting on a glorious throne with the seven spirits before it and twenty four other thrones around it. He further describes myriads upon myriads present around YHWH's throne: none of which equates to a temple room and its concept of separation. We are also told of four horses coming out from heaven, are we to believe that there are herds of spiritual horses running around the heavens. Then we have the pregnant woman with a crown of twelve stars and to sum it all, Rev.9:13 says the horns of the alter spoke! YHWH is 'The Creator' and Scripture is full of demonstrations of YHWH's ability to control all matter which is a general phenomenon of the spirit world. We could say John saw pictorial allegories of future events, not permanent heavenly fixtures. Moshe was given a similar experience with respect to the design for the tabernacle. YHWH's throne equates to both the 'Most Holy Place' and the 'Ark of the Covenant' but there is no resemblance to the earthly temple, in essence His throne is the heavenly temple. Rev.11:19 is most certainly describing YHWH's heavenly throne.

The Greek in Revelation is '*naos*' with a root meaning of dwelling place and where '*naos*' refers to YHWH's heavenly residence a more appropriate translation would have been throne not temple.

Conclusion to Parts 1 and 2

The temple system was the result of Israel's inability to achieve the status quo; they never qualified to be 'His (YHWH's) people.' Before Mashiach the flesh provided an insurmountable barrier preventing humanity becoming YHWH's people. Through the flesh death reigned spiritually and physically, thus spawning a temple system of separation and slaughter. But the temple system was just a stop gap until Mashiach inaugurated a new covenant, the basis of which is a changed heart – a heart of flesh and ending death's reign (Rom.5:14).

YHWH is going to fully cleanse and put the fullness of His spirit inside those He settles in the Land in the millennium and in all their descendants for evermore. With this fullness of spirit and the holy environment YHWH is going to create, the Land will be completely devoid of all unrighteousness,

"As for Me, this is My covenant with them," says YHWH, "My Spirit that is upon you and My Words (Torah) that I have put in your mouth shall not be withdrawn from your mouth, nor from the mouth of your descendants, nor from the mouth of your descendant's descendants," says YHWH, "from this time and forever." (Isa.59:21).

The result of YHWH's wrath at the end of this age and described in Revelation will necessitate a wholly new creation; human, animal and material. Enoch tells us it will be a changed earth with a completely new topography, an earth which YHWH will replenish with new life. Whilst we don't know the 'how' of it all what we can conclude is that the space occupied by the Land will replicate the original Garden of Eden. From the millennium depicted there is neither room nor purpose for a temple system with its separation and bloodletting. The 'Garden' itself was YHWH's earthly sanctuary – his 'temple;' just as the Land and the City will be His sanctuary in the millennium. In closing, referring to the 'eighth day' Revelation describes a New Jerusalem without a temple thus according to advocates of a future physical temple we would have the following scenario,

Pre Mashiach; Tanakh times = a temple
Between the first and second coming = no temple
In the millennium = a temple
In the eighth day = no temple

So the sequence promoted is, a temple- no temple – a temple – no temple; YHWH is not so inconsistent.

Clifford Fearnley 2020 (Revised 2023)