

Does YHWH Require a Future Temple Building? Part 4 (The Temple of Revelation 11)

Introduction

Part 3 mentioned the importance of approaching Scripture from a Hebraic mind-set and by not so doing is to completely miss the mark. It may now be appropriate to provide some evidence in support of what we have said. The following is a quote by Bivin and Blizzard Jr. from their book 'Understanding the difficult Words of Jesus,'

Our reasons for writing this book are not only to show that the original biography of Jesus was communicated in the Hebrew language but to show that the entire New Testament can only be understood from a Hebrew perspective.

Most Christians are aware that the Old Testament was originally communicated in Hebrew and that it is important to know Hebrew to understand the Old Testament. What they do not recognise, however, is the importance of Hebrew in understanding the New Testament.

There is of course a lot of justification for their comments including what most scholars refer to as the '*Mattityahu Document*' (Matthew Document), containing Matthew, Mark, Luke and Acts 1:1 – 15:35, which was written on one scroll, in Hebrew. Throughout this document the language uses identical sentence structure and idiomatic expression decidedly Hebrew (not Greek or Aramaic), thereby identifying with the authors Hebrew roots. When we consider that as many as 278 of the 404 verses in Revelation contain references to the Tanakh (Old Testament) it is believed that over 68% of Revelation either is or contains Hebrew Scripture.

Given the last 60 or so years of archeological findings associated with the ancient Israelites, most of the arguments supporting the idea that Greek and/or Aramaic were the languages used exclusively in Mashiach's day, have fallen by the wayside. That archeologists have discovered hundreds of personal ossuaries written by ordinary people to the deceased, all of which are written in Hebrew, reinforces the belief that this was the language most used. One example is 'The Bethpage Lid' an undertaker's employees' pay list that is written in Hebrew. It is illogical to suggest the authors of Scripture would suddenly switch and write books that primarily targeted Hebrews in something other than the language most common to them. Further evidence attributing to the use of the Hebrew language is found in the Dead Sea Scrolls of which more are written in Hebrew than in Aramaic.

In his writings concerning Jewish history in the first century, Josephus confirms Hebrew being written and spoken. There are scholars who contend that the references to Hebrew in the Brit Hadashah (New Testament) mean Aramaic. Whilst these scholars allege the same contention about Josephus, Grintz provides strong evidence to the contrary,

An investigation into the writings of Josephus demonstrates beyond doubt that whenever Josephus mentions '*Glotta Ebraion*' (Hebrew tongue), *Ebraion Dialekton* (Hebrew dialect), he always means Hebrew and no other language.

Grintz supports his comment with some excellent examples of which the following is one taken from Antiquities of the Jews I 34,

"Now this man was called Adam which in '*Glotta Ebraion*' signifies red.

Grintz summarises,

Thus, Josephus derives Adam (man) from Adom (red). In Aramaic 'red' is '*sumka*' there is no root *ADM* in the Aramaic tongue.

Another example in support of the usage of Hebrew is found in Acts 26:14. Which according to most translations (KJV, NKJV, ESV, AMP, The Scriptures, CJB, ET-Cepher) exclaim that when Mashiach appeared to the apostle Paul He spoke to him in Hebrew, not Greek, not Aramaic: Mashiach spoke in the common tongue of the Jewish people.

Finally, on this issue Dr. Daniel ben Gigi, a noted Hebrew authority who has spent a lifetime studying the 'Greek Writings' of the Brit Hadashah, commented at a seminar of the Messianic Jewish Northwest Regional conference in Portland, Oregon, that the Greek of the so-called original text is actually 'translator's Greek.' He explained that this was a form of the Greek language that was not spoken but instead, was used specifically to translate non-Greek documents into Greek writings. It is often referred to by scholars as 'sloppy Greek.' Why would Matthew, Mark and Luke, all of whom it is believed spoke impeccable Greek, chose to write in such an inferior manner? What is more we have evidence from the Church Fathers; Origen, Eusebius, Jerome, Epiphanius and Papius of the use of Hebrew with all concurring that the gospel of Mathew was originally written in the Hebrew language.

From the evidence now available to us, we can be confident that a large portion of the Brit Hadashah (New Testament) was originally penned in the Hebrew language and where Hebrew is stated it should not be interpreted 'Aramaic' as is the case in some translations. Thus, just as with the Tanakh, the Brit Hadashah must also be approached from a wholly Hebraic perspective if the fullness of the message is to be understood and that includes Revelation.

Revelation Confirms a Heavenly Temple – Or Does it?

As explained in Part 2 John saw pictorial allegories of future events and not permanent heavenly fixtures, we could say He was shown the future via cinema. Part 3 explained how the salvation theme parallels ancient Hebrew marriage precepts and this parallelism is prominent in Revelation but can only be seen through a Hebraic lens. So, let's put on our Hebraic spectacles and uncover the reality of what is said,

And another messenger came out of the temple (GK. naos), crying with a loud voice to him sitting on the cloud, Thrust in your sickle, and reap: for the time is come for you to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe. And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped. And another messenger came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle. And another messenger came out from the altar, having authority over fire; and cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe.(Rev.14:15-18).

And the temple (GK. naos) was filled with smoke from the glory of YHWH, and from his power; and no man was able to enter into the temple, till the seven plagues of the seven messengers were fulfilled. (Rev.15:8).

And I heard a great voice out of the temple (GK. naos) saying to the seven messengers, Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of YHWH upon the earth. (Rev.16:1).

These passages along with YHWH's command in Deuteronomy for Moshe to construct the tabernacle and its equipment in accordance with the heavenly pattern shown to him, have led to the belief there must exist a heavenly temple. Yet we are assured that where YHWH's presence resides there is no need of a temple structure,

And I saw no temple (GK. naos) therein: for the YHWH El Shaddai and the Lamb are the temple of it. And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of YHWH did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. (Rev.21:22-23).

When we consider that the ancient Greeks never believed gods resided in temples, it seems incredible that the translators understood the Greek 'naos' (G3485) to mean temple: an understanding that goes against the Greek mind-set. According to Strong the primary meaning of 'naos' is 'to dwell,' thus we are talking of YHWH's dwelling place and because of preconceptions we have ended up with 'temple' in Revelation. But if we take the time to

examine the above passages from Revelations 14, 15 and 16, it becomes clear that the verses are referring to a place from which originates authority and direction that is, YHWH's 'noas;' His dwelling place, a.k.a. His throne. Rev.21:22-23 preclude us from interpreting 'naos' as temple, the passage alludes to the lack of separation where sin does not exist, which is the situation in the Seventh Day in the Land (the new Garden of Eden) and of course in the Eighth Day. Continuing with Revelation,

And a reed like a measuring rod was given to me, and the messenger stood, saying, "Rise and measure the Temple of Elohim, and the altar, and those worshipping in it. But cast out the court which is outside the Temple, and do not measure it, for it has been given to the gentiles, and they shall trample the set-apart city under foot for forty-two months. (Rev.11:1-2).*

* The term 'Temple' specifically refers to the covered section of the temple building i.e., the 'Holy Place' and the 'Most holy Place.' The term generally excludes the outer court area.

There are several peculiarities with this passage, especially when we try and relate it to a physical temple. John is told to measure only the temple, the area having a cover; the holy Place and the Most Holy Place, the open area surrounding the temple; the outer court, is not to be measured even though this area is fundamental to the temple design and operation. The lack of any dimensional information or structural detail tells us that the objective has nothing to do with a physical temple structure. The message lies deeper and is shrouded in Hebrew custom and requires a Hebraic approach. First let us focus on three particular words; reed, measure and rod;

- **Reed**
The Hebrew is 'qâneh' but it is the root 'qânâh' that is pertinent to the passage in Revelation. 'Qânâh' has the meaning 'to be bought, purchased or possessed' and as we will see that is the essence of Rev.11.1
- **Measure**
There are several Hebrew words that can be associated with measure;
'êphâh: (H374) specifically a measure or quantity of grain.
mâdad: (H4058) to stretch or extend
middâh: (H4060) stature: level of development or achievement, tribute: a gift in acknowledgment of gratitude or esteem
- **Rod**
When we consider Rev.11:1 from a Hebraic concept rod 'maṭṭâh' (H4294) is incorrect. What should have been considered is 'shêbeṭ' (H7626) meaning septer which from a Hebrew concept is a sign of authority or identity.

The term measure in Rev.11:1 has no association with size or quantity, it is meant in terms of evaluating. John is instructed to evaluate the people who are standing under cover. When we apply 'qânâh,' 'shêbeṭ' and 'middah' the message gains some clarity. These are people who have been bought they are identified as special and are separated because they have achieved a superior status. They are the only ones permitted to stand in the covered area of the temple. So, a more accurate presentation for this passage would be,

And I was instructed to go and identify those who had been bought by the blood of the Lamb, who because of their esteem, have been separated and are worthy to stand in the temple (covered area of the tabernacle) before the throne.

To complete the picture, we need to add a few other verses, those concerning a certain multitude,

And white robes were given to every one of them; and they were told, that they should rest for a little while longer, until their fellow servants and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled. (Rev.6:11).

After this I looked and saw a great multitude, which no man could number, out of all nations, and tribes and peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white

robes, and palms in their hands; (Rev.7:9).

And one of the elders answered, saying to me, "Who are these dressed in white robes? and where did they come from?" And I said to him, "Sir, you know." And he said to me, "These are those coming out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. (Rev.7:13-14).

The scene presented to John is of a group of very special people dressed in white gowns standing under a cover or canopy in front of YHWH's throne. The pictured allegory is of the 'bride' standing under the marriage 'chuppah' in front of the ultimate Rabbi; YHWH. Concerning the bride Revelation continues,

They shall hunger no more, neither thirst anymore; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes. (Rev.7:16-17).

What John is witnessing is the marriage ceremony of the Lamb which will take place on the Eighth Day. We know it is the Eighth Day because it is the bride and groom that are present in the Land in the millennium, not husband and wife,

Thus said YHWH, "In this place of which you say, 'It is dried up, without man and without beast,' in the cities of Yehudah, in the streets of Yerushalayim that are deserted, without man and without inhabitant and without beast, there shall once again be heard the voice of joy and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride, the voice of those who are saying, 'Praise YHWH of hosts, for YHWH is good, for His kindness is forever,' of those who are bringing the offering of praise into the House of YHWH. For I shall turn back the captivity of the land, as at the first," declares YHWH. (Jer.33:10-11).

What is more there is no reason to believe that the 'bride' will not increase throughout the millennium.

Conclusion

Then we have John's vision of the New Jerusalem, was John shown what was to be an actual structure or was it merely a pictorial allegory illustrating the culmination of YHWH's plan for humanity – marriage to His Son. Yes, John was given the dimensions of the structure which for some would be sufficient to confirm a physical structure. The city was in the form of a cube approximating to 2216 kilometres which, when compared to the 12 kilometre high flight path for planes, this city is of a truly phenomenal size. Could its magnitude simply allude to the size of Mashiach's bride and nothing more? This vision is given after the temple vision portraying the wedding ceremony itself, thereby paralleling ancient custom where, after the wedding ceremony, the groom takes his wife off to the residence he has prepared. The residence was normally in the form of an annexure to his father's house exactly as described by Mashiach to His disciples in John 14:2.

One final point of interest concerns the 144,000 mentioned in Revelation, we have to ask why is there any reference to this specific group of men, what is their significance? Well, let us consider what we are told about these men; there are 12,000 from each of the twelve tribes of Israel, they had not defiled themselves with women; they were virgins, they were sealed in some way – possibly via YHWH's name written on their foreheads and they followed the Lamb wherever He went. This profile aligns exactly with the character and role of the groomsmen in the ancient Hebrew wedding; they had to be relatives of the groom, all were virgins, they were set apart (sealed) for the groom and they accompanied the groom.

The visions given to John in Revelation are, I believe, a pictorial account of YHWH's program for humanity and its ultimate conclusion – a wedding ceremony shrouded in ancient covenant custom.