

# Preparations for a Third Jewish Temple

Edited by Lambert Dolphin from various sources

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By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down,  
yea, we wept when we remembered Zion.

We hung out harps upon the willows in the midst of it.  
For there those who carried us away captive required of us a song. And those who plundered us required of  
us mirth, saying,  
"Sing us one of the songs of Zion!"

How shall we sing the Lord's song in a foreign land?  
If I forget you, O Jerusalem,  
let my right hand forget her skill!  
If I do not remember you,  
let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth  
- if I do not exalt Jerusalem above my chief joy.  
(Psalm 137:1-6)

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## Yearnings for a Third Temple

The 137th Psalm, a hymn of the exiles of Jerusalem during the Babylonian captivity, eloquently expresses the yearnings of the Jewish people for their homeland, their city and their temple - then and now.

Jerusalem, "City of Peace" has known nearly two dozen wars and destructions since its existence was first known to us from the Biblical record. Abraham's meeting with Melchizedek about 2000 BC reveals that there was in the city (known then as "Salem"), even at that early date. A righteous Gentile king, Melchizedek, ruled there as "priest of God Most High" (*El Elyon*). Abraham's family had lapsed into idolatry living in Babylon (Ur of the Chaldees), in spite of his legitimacy of his being in the line of Noah's son, Shem. It is possible that Melchizedek was Abraham's teacher and spiritual mentor who gave Abraham additional information, and possibly even ancient documents, concerning the God of the land of Israel who had called him there.

During the time period after 70 A.D. Jerusalem should have long since fallen into oblivion. This city with no natural wealth, no oil reserves, and no great strategic military value. Ancient trade routes passed up and down the coastline of the Mediterranean Sea or along the Jordan Valley. The "King's Highway" ran North and South on the plateau of Jordan - Jerusalem was out of the way. Why should anyone

pass by there?

Today, centers of modern commerce and trade are in Tel Aviv or Haifa. Jerusalem is more of a city of religion, art, culture, and museums than an economically viable regional marketplace or a center of business activity. Yet Jerusalem thrives in our time as a city full of mystical attractiveness and endless fascination.

As never before in history, Jerusalem is at the center of today's headlines. The city which grew up around the small walled-village captured by King David from the Jebusites 3000 years ago is the focal point of never-ending debate among the great superpowers. No other city has been desired and fought over has Jerusalem. In its history Jerusalem has been fought over by armies of the Assyrians, Babylonians, Egyptians, Greeks, Ptolemies, Seleucids, Romans, Byzantines, Persians, Arabs, Seljuks, Crusaders, Mongols, Mamelukes, by the Turks, the British, and the Jordanians. Today the nations of all the world consider it their responsibility and obligation to meddle in her politics and destiny.

As a religious center Jerusalem remains sacred to (and fought over by) all three monotheistic religions: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. It is an open secret that the Pope aspires to set up his world headquarters there, having claimed for many years that the Holy Land has all along really been under Roman Catholic "stewardship." UN debates, Arab neighbors, and the PLO urge the "internationalization" of this modest city, though it is no secret that they actually want the city all to themselves without any Jews. All the while, religious pilgrims from all nations continue to flock to the Holy City in droves numbering millions per year.

Thus all the eyes of the world are upon Jerusalem, City of Peace, today as never before. This is a city that has been besieged about forty different times and destroyed (at least partially) on thirty-two different occasions. The rulership of Jerusalem has changed hands some twenty-six times. Since 1948 Jerusalem has experienced four wars.

From the time of the establishment of the State of Israel in May of 1948 until 1967, the city was divided. Walls, barbed-wire fences and a desolated strip of non-man's land cut through the very heart of the city, especially excluding the Jews from the Old City and the Temple Mount. During that time the Jewish Quarter was levelled and its synagogues burned. Jewish graves and monuments were desecrated or turned into latrines.

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### **The Old City Liberated**

In June of 1967 the Jews were involved in a war that resulted in the liberation of the Old City of Jerusalem. On the third day of the Six Day War, Israeli paratrooper Motta Gur, mounted on a half-track, announced that the Temple Mount has been regained. On June 7 of that year the Israeli troops moved into the Old City and stood at the Western Wall (Wailing Wall) for prayer. Rabbi Shlomo Goren declared:

"We have taken the city of God. We are entering the Messianic era for the Jewish people, and I promise to the Christian world that what we are responsible for we will take care of."

The city of Jerusalem was reunified and the Star of David flew again from its ramparts.

### **The Temple Mount Restored to Muslim Control**

On Saturday June 17, 1967, shortly after the end of the Six Day War, Defense minister Moshe Dayan entered the Al-Aksa Mosque for a historic meeting. In a gesture of good will, Dayan sat down on the prayer carpet with five leaders of the Supreme Muslim Council (the Waqf) of what had been Jordanian-controlled Jerusalem. That discussion fixed Israel's policy regarding the Temple Mount, a policy that remains unchanged to this day.

Dayan had ordered the Israeli flag removed from on top of the Dome of the Rock on the afternoon of the Old City's liberation. His discussion with the Muslims led to further concessions. The administrative control over the Temple Mount was to be the sole responsibility of the Supreme Muslim Council - the (Jordanian) Waqf. Though the Jews would be permitted free access to the Mount, prayer by Jews was prohibited. Dayan refused to permit any Jewish identification with Judaism's holiest site. To him, the Temple Mount held only historic interest. He said:

"I have no doubt that because the power is in our hands we must take a stand based on yielding. We must view the Temple Mount as a historic site relating to past memory."

The government of Israel then allocated responsibility of the Temple Mount area to different groups. Israel's Department of Antiquities were given the south, southeast, and southwest area of the Temple Mount to explore archaeologically. The top of the Temple Mount, however, site of the First and Second Temples, was given over to the Muslims to administrate. To the present day, the PLO Muslim Waqf allows tourists to visit the Mount a few hours per day - but they do not allow any freedom of worship or any non-Muslim archeological activity there. The entire area is treated as if it were a gigantic outdoor mosque. To this day, visitors who stroll out of very limited areas - to view over the wall at the Pinnacle of the Temple, or to see the interior of the Golden

Gate, for example - will be quickly restrained by an Arab guard.

Shortly after the Temple Mount was recaptured, Rabbi Shlomo Goren, then chief chaplain of the Israeli army, and one of the leading advocates for the rebuilding of the Temple, attempted to establish a Jewish identity on the Mount. The Western Wall below the Mount was all Israel actually possessed and to Goren that was not enough. He believed regaining Jewish presence on the Mount would be a major step towards Israel's long-awaited redemption. On August 15, 1967, Goren led demonstrative Jewish prayers on the Temple Mount compound. His actions caused shockwaves and much apprehension among Muslims as to the fate of their sacred sites.

Goren prayed within the Temple Mount courtyard, but this was contrary to the newly agreed arrangement with the Israeli government. The Waqf responded by locking the entrance gate above the Western Wall that leads to the Temple Mount. The keys to that gate were confiscated soon thereafter by the government of Israel and Jewish military police have been on duty at the entrance gate ever since.

The two chief Rabbis of Israel (Sephardic and Askenazi) then compiled a joint statement forbidding Jews to visit the Temple Mount. Their position was that the Jewish people were ceremonially unclean and might accidentally tread on the place where the holy of holies stood in the Temple.

### **Now a Political Issue**

The Temple Mount had become a political issue as far back as 1930 when Mufti Haj Amin El-Husseini turned Solomon's Stables into a shooting range and whipped up a frenzy over Jewish prayer at the Western Wall. The current PLO-controlled Supreme Muslim Council looks to a 1931 decision that the Temple Mount is exclusive Waqf property. The Waqf - who nominally owe their allegiance to Jordan - do not accept the reunification of Jerusalem. Islamic preachers during the regular Friday day of prayer on the Mount regularly and routinely denounce Israel the right of the Jews to exist, frequently delivering inflammatory polemics designed to foster Arab hatred towards the Jews.

Prior to 1967 the central structure on the Mount for the Muslims was the Al-Aksa Mosque. After the city was recaptured in 1967, the Waqf began to term the entire Temple Mount as Al-Aksa. In effect, they annexed the entire Mount.

### **No Exploration or Excavation**

The rabbinical prohibition against Jews walking around on the Temple Mount has now been extended. The rabbis next declared that there was to be no exploration,

excavation, or even prayer on the Temple Mount. Yet they continued to acknowledge that the Temple Mount is the center of Jerusalem:

The Temple Mount is the red-hot heart of the city. This doesn't mean that everyone who lives here turns up there in the course of a day, a week, a month or a year, or even turns his mind to it. He may go through years without giving it a thought, just as a Roman might not think of St. Peter's. Some young Jerusalemites, who can't remember a time when Jews couldn't freely and safely go to the Wall, do take it for granted. Yet even they know that Jerusalem, unlike Rome, is contested. They believe too that whoever holds the Holy Places, and especially the Temple Mount, possesses the upper hand in city, and therefore the country. ([Ref. 1](#))

### **Orthodox Jews and the Temple Mount**

In their attempts to minimize tensions between Jew and Arab concerning the Temple Mount a ban on Jewish entry was formally posted at the entrance gate by the Chief Rabbinate of Israel.

#### **NOTICE AND WARNING**

**Entrance to the area of the Temple Mount is forbidden to everyone  
by Jewish Law owing to the sacredness of the place.**

*--The Chief Rabbinate of Israel.*

Jews were thus officially banned from setting foot on the Temple platform. In practice many Orthodox Jews observe the ban while other Jews do not. The stated reason for the ban is that gentiles, as well as Jews, are regarded as "unclean" today and are thus unfit to walk on the sacred mount. The Mount is considered so sacred that one is forbidden even to fly over it because the holiness of the site extends into the heavens. Therefore the Orthodox Jew is allowed only to admire the mount from a distance. This ban will stay in effect, many believe, until the Messiah comes. Because of the ban the Jews pray and celebrate at the Western wall, an area in earlier times known as the "Wailing" wall.

Other devout Jews have disputed the reasons for the Rabbinical ban claiming that the Temple Mount foundations are indeed defiled and must be ceremonially cleansed. Until the new temple is completed and ready to be placed into service it is permissible

for unclean persons to visit there and even to work on the building of the Third Temple. First the temple must be cleansed - then the people - is their argument.

We know from history that when the Herodian Temple stood, stone plaques, some in Latin, others in Greek, were placed in the Court of the Gentiles warning any Gentile not to enter the precincts of the Temple at the risk of losing his life.

*No Gentile is to be approach within the balustrade  
round the Temple and the peribolos.*

*Whosoever is caught will be guilty of his own death  
which will follow.*

While there were no such signs in later times, for example when the enclosure became a sacred place for Islam, Muslims were no less jealous to guard the area from the steps of non-Muslims and threats to kill people trying to enter are recorded in the reports of travelers who came to Jerusalem in the past. The restrictions were partially lifted in the middle of the nineteenth century but were clamped down again when Arab nationalism rose to a peak under the then Jerusalem Mufti, Haj Amin el Husseini, during the thirties of the twentieth century.

The Waqf these days only permits very limited access to the Temple Mount as noted. Sometimes for only a few hours a day and at other times no access whatsoever. Any attempts by Jews or Christians to pray, read from the Bible, sing or speak openly about their faith are immediately squelched by the ever-zealous and ever-present Arab guards, most of whom are ill-tempered, rude, and disrespectful to tourists. In all fairness, it should be added that those visitors who treat the Muslim guides, guards, and care-takers with courtesy and respect will often receive a warm response. As the Bible says, "Love covers a multitude of sins."

### **Role of the Jewish Ministry of Religious Affairs**

The ministry of religious affairs have not been sympathetic to those who wish freedom of access on the Temple Mount. On June 27, 1967, the day the law regarding the Holy Places was adopted, the Israel Minister of Religious Affairs said "it is our standing afar and our disinclination to enter that illustrate our awe and reverence over the site of our former Temples."

After the city of Jerusalem was reunified in 1967 the Knesset passed a law which guaranteed freedom of access and worship in all the holy sites. This law is enforced with sensitivity and diligence all over Israel---with one notable exception, and that is the Temple Mount. Though freedom of worship is said to be guaranteed, any open display of non-Islamic worship is not allowed. The carrying of a Jewish prayer book or the attempt to pray on the Mount is strictly taboo. The police believe that such an act is a threat to the peace because of Muslim reaction, and indeed the Muslims regard such actions by non-Muslims as acts of disrespect for Allah. Hence the Temple Mount is treated differently by the government from all the rest of the holy sites in Israel.

On at least four different occasions the High Court of Justice has heard pleas from Jews to permit freedom of worship on the Temple Mount. Each time they have been denied. One of the reasons that this has not caused more of a furor is a ban on the entrance to the Temple Compound that has been published by the chief Rabbinate of Israel. The holy site is off limits to those who may transgress its sacred ground.

Former chief Rabbi Shlomo Goren believed otherwise. It was his opinion that only a small part of the Temple Mount area, some 15%, is off limits to the people. Goren attempted to measure the area to pinpoint where a worshipper can or cannot stand. It was his contention that worshippers should be allowed in the large area of the Temple Compound that is not the sacred portions. The problem is that there is no consensus of opinion as to where to measure to indicate what parts are sacred and what parts are not.

Chief Rabbi Mordechai Eliahu suggested that if a synagogue were to be built, it should be done on the eastern wall of the Temple Mount. Such a synagogue stood there until the 16th century. The entrance to the synagogue could be from outside the wall preventing people from walking upon the prohibited areas of the Mount.

### **"Assaulting" the Mount**

Since 1967 there have been various attempts by individuals and by groups to assault the Temple Mount in order to perform Jewish blood sacrifices, to destroy a Muslim building, or to upset the balance of power and to alter the status quo.

On August 21, 1969 Michael Rohan a non-Jewish tourist from Australia set fire to the Al Aksa Mosque. Firefighters fought the blaze for four hours as an angry Muslim crowd shouted "Down with Israel." The president of the Muslim Council accused the fire brigades of a deliberately slow response. The Arab states blamed Israel for the incident even though Rohan identified himself as a "Church of God" member. The fire

destroyed a priceless on thousand year old wood and ivory pulpit (minbar) that had been sent from Aleppo by Saladin.

At his trial Rohan told the court that he believed himself to be "the Lord's emissary" in accordance with a prophecy in the Book of Zechariah. The court convicted Rohan but then declared him criminally insane. He was placed in an Israeli mental hospital. The Temple Mount remained closed to non-Muslims for two months after the incident. For the next three years, all non-Muslims were barred from El Aksa Mosque.

After the ban was lifted the Muslim guards were still very nervous. The mere opening of a purse for a handkerchief would cause the guards to come running and search for a bomb.

### **The Case of Yoel Lerner**

In October 1982 Yoel Lerner, a member of Meir Kahane Kach movement, was arrested for planning to sabotage one of the mosques on the Temple Mount. Lerner was convicted of planning to blow up the Dome of the Rock. Previously he had served a three year sentence for heading a group that plotted to overthrow the government and establish a state based upon religious law. He was sentenced to two and one half years in prison.

### **...And of Allen Harry Goodman**

In April 11, 1982 Allen Harry Goodman, an Israeli soldier, went on a shooting rampage on the Temple Mount. Storming into the Al Aksa Mosque with an M-16 rifle Goodman killed a Muslim guard and wounded other Arabs. This incident set off a week of rioting and strikes in Jerusalem, the West Bank, and the Gaza Strip. At his trial Goodman told the court that he had expected to become "King of the Jews by liberating this holy spot." He was convicted a year later and sentenced to life plus two terms of twenty years.

Jerusalem's psychiatrists and mental institutions have learned to expect, and to professionally render aid to a growing number of insane or marginally unstable individuals who flock to Jerusalem every year. Some pilgrims claim to be the True Messiah, or the Virgin Bride of Jesus, or the Two Witnesses of the Apocalypse. Moses, Elijah and Nehemiah, usually in costume, announce their return from the dead fairly often in the public square. Quickly these problem children are whisked off to wards now accustomed to the bizarre and the unexpected as regular parts of living in "the City of a Great King." The problem is so significant it has been labeled "the Jerusalem Syndrome." The City of Peace" preserves its tranquillity and peace one day at a time, sometimes by a slim margin indeed.

### **Another Foiled Raid on the Mount**

On March 10, 1983 the police quickly stopped an attempted raid on the Mount:

JERUSALEM --Israeli security forces arrested about 45 Jewish extremists, including supporters of radical Rabbi Meir Kahane, foiling an armed raid on the Temple Mount to seize Muslim and Jewish holy places, police said Friday.

Security forces, working on a tip, Thursday night captured 10 of the extremists carrying army rifles, hoes and crowbars near an ancient passageway to the area in East Jerusalem, Israel radio said.

Thirty-five other Israelis were subsequently arrested, but four were later released after proving they had nothing to do with the incident.

An undisclosed number of those detained were Israeli soldiers but were not in uniform, police spokesman Meir Gilboa said.

The religious militants...wanted to occupy the area to be able to pray on the site, where Muslims worship, Israeli radio said...

Interior Minister Yosef Burg, the nation's internal security chief, assured leaders of the Supreme Muslim Council that authorities will stop any possible attacks of worshipers or attempts to curtail freedom of worship. Jerusalem Police Chief Yehoshua Caspi said a takeover "could have caused a most serious conflagration" between Arabs and Jews.

Twenty-nine people were eventually charged for the intrusion but were acquitted of all charges.

### **Jerusalem Day 1983**

On May 11, 1983 the Israeli high court of Justice ordered a very limited lifting of the ban of worship on the Temple Mount Compound. The court ordered the Jerusalem police to permit Gershon Salomon and other members of the "Faithful of the Temple Mount," to enter a small corner of the Temple precincts to worship for an hour and a half. The service commemorated Jerusalem Day, the anniversary of the reunification of the Holy City. Hundreds of worshippers crowded into the tiny area, defined by a rim of police barricades stretching but 15 feet from the Mograbi Gate. The entire space allowed for Jewish worship was approximately 700 square feet, between 3:30 p.m. and 5:00 p.m., on Jerusalem Day.

The court order was controversial. Many Muslims saw it as an infringement on their religious sovereignty over the Temple Mount. More secular Jews feared that the court's decision would simply complicate the already delicate relationships with the Arabs. Many religious Jews celebrated the decision, declaring that Jerusalem cannot truly be considered liberated until a Jew has a right to share the Temple Mount equally with other religions who wish to worship the true and living God. Some Rabbis called for more severe restrictions to the point of allowing the Mount to be in permanent Muslim control so as to prevent Jews from entering altogether. As usual, paradoxes, extreme pluralism, diversity of opinion, and multiple contradictions (common to daily life in Jerusalem) prevailed.

### **An Underground Riot**

In the summer of 1983 Rabbi Yehuda Getz, the former Rabbi of the Western Wall, (he died in 1995) broke through the Western Wall deliberately excavating to the East (at "Cistern 30") in their newly excavated underground tunnel which runs under the old city. This tunnel extends from the prayer area, Ha Kotel, North towards the Fortress Antonia. Getz hoped to eventually reach the foundation of the Second Temple. During this tunnelling, Rabbis Getz and Goren claim to have seen the Ark of the Covenant according to statements they later made to the press. However the Waqf guards on the Temple Mount discovered the underground activity and soon sent down some young men through cistern entrances above to "discourage" the work. A fist fight ensued and the episode concluded with the sealing of the wall with six feet of reinforced cement. The incident was especially tense as it was not certain at the time whether or nor the Jerusalem police had jurisdiction to intervene in the underground excavation since the area was under the jurisdiction of Rabbi Getz. The so-called [Rabbinical Tunnel](#) was opened to the public in 1996 as an outstanding new archaeological attraction.

### **The Lifta Band Incident**

In January 27, 1984 the most ambitious plan to assault the Temple Mount occurred. The Lifta band, evidently wanting to bring the return of the Messiah, attempted to blow up the Muslim Holy sites on the Temple Mount.

The plan drew international attention. The headlines read "Israel Investigates Jewish Extremists in Mosque Plot."

Israeli police established a special task force Sunday to investigate suspected Jewish terrorism after an attempt to destroy one of Islam's holiest sites was thwarted at the last minute.

Police reportedly believe that Jewish zealots, perhaps including some with Israeli army training, organized the plot to blow up the Dome of the Rock shrine and Al Aqsa mosque in the walled Old City of Jerusalem.

Security forces, notified by an Arab watchman, prevented the assault early Friday. The attackers fled, leaving behind them explosives, including hand grenades of a type issued by the Israeli army.

Information about the thwarted attack was withheld for about 36 hours, apparently to allow emotions to cool. News of an attempt against the Islamic shrines could have touched off riots among the Arabs of Israel and the Israeli-occupied West Bank of the Jordan River and Gaza Strip, who are overwhelmingly Muslim. Israeli military censors prohibited publication of the news in Arabic-language newspapers published Saturday. Israeli police revealed the attempted attack late Saturday.

The mass-circulation Tel Aviv newspaper Yediot Aharnot said police recovered almost 250 pounds of explosives, including dozens of grenades, boxes of dynamite and about 12 mortar rounds. . .

Jerusalem Mayor Teddy Kollek expressed shock over the incident. He assured the cities top Muslim official, Mufti Saadedin Alami, that the authorities will do everything possible to apprehend the criminals.

Kollek also urged Alami to permit installation of an electronic fence to increase security around the site. . .

The Supreme Muslim Council, which supervises the shrine, warned, "If the attempted explosions had succeeded all Arab countries would have immediately launched a holy war against Israel." Based on the aftermath of far less serious incidents on Temple Mount - which have triggered rioting among the Arabs of Israel and the territories - the prediction seems to have been a reasonable one."

This latest plot caused all of Jerusalem to shudder:

JERUSALEM --The attempted terrorist bombing of Islam's third-holiest sight has created aftershocks in Jewish and Arab sectors of this city, releasing a collective shudder at the thought of what might have happened if the golden-topped Dome of the Rock or the silver-domed Al-Aksa mosque had been destroyed by dynamite. . .

A week ago Friday, six to eight intruders armed with at least 30 pounds of explosives and 22 Israeli army-issue hand grenades scaled the outer wall before dawn and sipped

under the cover of a cloud sky onto the compound that contains the mosques. They headed toward the Dome of the Rock.

An unarmed Muslim guard noticed them and alerted Israeli police, who chased them off. The intruders left behind explosives, ropes, ladders and knapsacks. Palestinian sources claim that the amount of dynamite left was nearly 10 times what police have reported.

No suspects have been arrested, but police commander Yehoshua Caspi told a parliamentary committee Tuesday that he is convinced Jewish extremists had plotted the attack. . .

"There would have been riots and mass murder," said a dental technician in Jewish West Jerusalem, reflecting the concern that has spread throughout the city. "And you know, I wouldn't have blamed the Arabs. What would we do if Arab fanatics blew up the Western (Wailing) Wall?"

The aborted attack, media reports of which were censored for nearly two days, sparked isolated riots in Nablus and a nearby refugee camp on the West Bank. Arab commentators elsewhere in the Middle East claimed that if the bombing had been successful, it would have started a new jihad, or holy war, against Israel.

"It would have been the disaster of the decade," said Bishara Babbah, the new editor in chief of East Jerusalem's Al-Fajr newspaper.

The incident has renewed a call for more protection for Jerusalem's religious sites.

Police have not arrested anyone in those attacks, during which a Muslim clergyman and a Christian nun were injured. Anonymous callers have claimed responsibility on behalf of a group calling itself Terror Against Terror.

"Sometimes I can accept these things as isolated acts for extremist purposes," said Nazmi Ju'beh, curator of the Islamic Museum near the Dome of the Rock, "but this is happening in an organized way, and the government isn't doing anything."

Police patrols have been stepped up since the foiled attack, and officials said they are planning new electronic surveillance around the 30-acre plateau that occupies the entire southeast corner of the walled Old City of Jerusalem.

Many Jerusalem residents believe that the attempted bombing is connected with

increasing pressure from Jewish nationalist extremists to be allowed to pray on the compound , where the ancient Temple stood.

This threat to the peace of the city and the security of the Temple Mount was further complicated by claims in the press that money for the assault on the Mount was provided by Christian sources.

### **Not the Last Attempt**

After the foiled attempt the Jerusalem Temple Foundation issued the following statement:

The latest attempted assault on the Temple Mount will not be the last as long as the present injustice prevails. Police and soldiers and violence and barbed wire could be dispensed with, and peace reign if one simple basic condition were fulfilled - namely freedom of worship for all faiths on the Temple Mount as provided by Israeli law and as confirmed by the high court of Israel. The rule of Israeli law must be observed and upheld.

### **Arrests and Convictions**

Yehuda Cohen, one of the members of the assault group was sentenced to one and one half years of prison for his part in the conspiracy. Cohen confessed to scouting the security arrangement of the Temple Mount as his part in blowing up the Dome of the Rock. He later expressed remorse over his actions. The judge, Ezra Hedaya, stressed the gravity of the crime.

I won't exaggerate if I say that the aim of the conspiracy - to blow up the Dome of the Rock, holy to many millions of Muslims around the world is shocking, and constitutes a threat to public order and endangers the public. Who knows what would have been the consequences of the conspiracy. ([Ref. 2](#))

### **Claims by the Islamic Council**

Jerusalem (UPI) --The Islamic Council in occupied East Jerusalem Wednesday said Israel is resuming controversial Temple Mount archeological excavations and charged the digging is destroying foundations of Muslim structures. A spokesman for the Council, who asked not to be identified, said foreign diplomatic missions were asked to intervene to stop the digging at Judaism's holies site, where the Islamic shrines of Al-Aksa and Dome of the Rock also stand. ..

Sheik Saad-Eddin Alami, head of the Supreme Islamic Council, the highest religious

body for east Jerusalem and the occupied West Bank, charged Tuesday that excavations continued despite Islamic objections. . .

Israeli officials denied they have renewed excavation work, and said people seen at the site are merely stationed as observers.

They said the actual digging, undertaken by the Ministry for Religious Affairs in a tunnel along the northern section of the Temple Mount's Western Wall, was stopped in early April following appeals by Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir and Jerusalem Mayor Teddy Kollek.

The excavations have been in dispute since October 1981, when Old City Arabs clashed with authorities as diggers veered eastward toward the Dome of the Rock Mosque, the legendary site of the prophet Mohammed's ascent to heaven.

The eastward dig was sealed off at the time, but continued in other directions.

A leader of the Islamic Council, Adnan Husseini, told United Press International "something is going on again down there in the tunnel."

He said he and his fellow engineers have been barred from approaching the excavation site.

Husseini said he was "very concerned over the ongoing underground activity. " He said he could hardly cope with the damage already caused to five Islamic structures straddling the dig.

Sheikh Sa'ad Din Alami, the head of the Islamic Supreme Council for the Waqf and Islamic Holy places, reacted in the following manner to various journalists concerning Jewish attempts to regain the Temple Mount:

The Temple Mount belongs to Muslims. Muslims only hate the Jew as a ruler. The Jews are free to believe that the Temple Mount is sacred to them, but I think that it is holy to me. To permit them a corner for prayer is against the Koran. ([Ref. 3](#))

"There are no Jewish remains on the Mount. There never were Jewish antiquities here." ([Ref. 8](#))

"They must know that this is a mosque and they cannot pray in a mosque with a Sefer Torah." ([Ref. 9](#))

From these responses it is clear that the Muslims officially disdain any attempts by the Jews (or Christians) to have a presence on the Mount.

### **A Secret Weapons Cache?**

Members of the Knesset, the Israeli government, have from time to time accused the Arabs of stashing arms on Temple Mount. Access to the entire area of the Southeastern corner of the Mount is strictly forbidden to all but the Muslim guards. This area below which are vaulted rooms known as Solomon's stables, are reportedly an arms dump for Arab terrorist groups. There have been outcries from many Jews that the government investigate this allegation and take action.

On January 8, 1986 a group of Israel Parliament (Knesset) members including those who believe that the Jews have a right to pray upon the Temple Mount gathered to investigate charges that arms were being stored beneath the Dome of the Rock and that archaeological sites were being destroyed. Because of the growing number of Jews who wish to rebuilt the Temple, it is believed that Muslims were systematically destroying any evidence of the previous Temples.

When the group of Knesset members reached Solomon's stables on their official tour they were informed that no cameras were allowed below the ground. Assuming the Muslims had something to hide, the Israeli officials then demanded to be allowed to take their cameras with them. The Muslim authorities confronted the delegation and an altercation broke out. Atop a Muslim minaret, a loudspeaker announced that the Jews were attempting to commandeer the Temple Mount. A near riot occurred and the legislators decided to leave.

They returned six days later with one member reading aloud from Psalm 123 and others praying aloud. This caused another disturbance of the peace. An Arab delegate in Morocco responded to this event by calling for Islamic countries to "wage a jihad (holy war) in all its forms until Jerusalem is liberated."

### **More Flag Waving at Gate**

Following the visit of the Knesset member to the Mount, three young people hoisted an Israeli flag over the Mograbi Gate of the Temple Mount. The flag was flying for about three minutes before they were arrested by police officers who removed the flag. The demonstrators were arrested for civil disturbance.

A local Sheik reacted to the visits of the Knesset members:

I condemn these actions in the strongest possible terms and demand that the keys be returned to the Waqf immediately, that the police be reminded that the Mosque is an Islamic holy shrine, whose gates only Muslims are entitled to open or seal off, and that the army and border police be forbidden to enter the Mosque area. Thousands of years ago, the Jews built a temple which was subsequently destroyed. During the period of the second Caliph, Omar Ben Khatab, a mosque was built on the southern part of the yard of Al-Aksa Mosque. At that time, there were neither temples for the Jews, nor churches for the Christians on the site and no building was destroyed.

Historically, there is no proof that Al-Aksa or the Dome of the Rock were built on the grounds of Solomon's Temple, although the Jews claim that the Temple originally stood on this site. The Muslims have been in charge of this piece of land for 14 centuries now and the Jews have no right to advocate the destruction of our mosques because they want to rebuild Solomon's Temple.

It is impossible for any Jew to be allowed to pray in the grounds of the Al-Aksa Mosque. They will have to kill all the Muslims before they can pray there unhindered. ([Ref. 4](#))

Originally the Ottoman government designated a specific place on the Mount from which police could ensure the security of the Mosque. The British and later the Jordanians and the Israelis later used the same place as a police center. Then, the Israeli police were joined by border police. Following our protests, it was decided that the border police should merely man the doors of the Mosque area and would not actually wander in the grounds themselves, but this decision has subsequently been ignored, unfortunately.

The Islamic Council asked the Waqf to form a guard unit to protect the Mosque area day and night and survey all those entering. These guards have the authority to prohibit any non-Muslim from praying in the Mosque, and if necessary to use force in order to ensure that these rules are adhered to.

### **Yet Another Riot**

In October 1990, when the Crisis in the Persian Gulf between the Allied Forces and Iraq was heating up an incident took place on the Temple Mount that caught the attention of the world. The Temple Mount Faithful marched on the Mount and unfurled a banner denouncing the Muslim presence. New reports erroneously said that the were Jews attempting to lay a foundation stone for the Third Temple on the Temple Mount. They marched from toward the Temple but were stopped by the Israeli authorities.

In the wake of the riot 22 Palestinians were killed. The United Nations censured Israel for overreacting to the incident. The United States, wishing to keep together the fragile coalition with Arab states against Iraq, voted against Israel. There was no censure of the Palestinians who started the riot.

Newsweek reported on the bloody clash that left over twenty Palestinians dead:

Last weeks clash was only the most bloody of several incidents in recent years in which young Arabs, rocks in hand, have rushed to ward off Jewish "attack." Their religious leaders teach that those who die defending the Noble Sanctuary go immediately to heaven. "If we give up one centimeter, if we let them place even one toe [on the mount] it will be the end of our holy places," said Muhammad Watani, a resident of the Old City. "It will be easier for us to die first." To Muslims, the deaths last week only deepened the sanctity of a place both faiths have long associated with glorious redemption and epic destruction. ([Ref. 5](#))

Newsweek also said it was:

...a cycle of misunderstanding: following rumors of a Jewish "invasion," Palestinian youth rushed Israeli police on Al Aqsa plaza. When the police killed an Arab, the Palestinians replied with rocks, scattering worshipers at the Western Wall below. Enraged Israeli's fought back with live ammunition killing 21. ([Ref. 5](#))

This is what was commonly reported. But is that what really occurred? Mortimer Zuckerman, Editor-in-Chief of U.S. News and World Report, tells a different story:

The impression given to the world is that the Palestinians assembled at the Al Aksa Mosque in order to confront a small band of Jewish Zealots, the Temple Mount Faithful, who have been intent on establishing a third Jewish temple on the Temple Mount. It is true the group planned a march---marches in previous years have been non-violent---but there was no march of the Faithful on the fateful Sunday. The Supreme Court of Israel had banned the demonstration. The Muslim Council, Wakf, a kind of mini-Vatican organization that the Israelis permit to rule the Muslim holy places on the Temple Mount, was informed of the Supreme Court ruling. All the Arab language newspapers in Jerusalem had published news stories about the Court's ban several days earlier, at the request of Israeli authorities. These efforts to keep the peace were frustrated because on the night before this holy day of Judaism, Palestinian-Arab activists recruited thousands of Arabs to come to this holy place where some 20,000 Jewish pilgrims - not the faithful zealots - would be praying on the adjacent plaza some 40 feet below the Western Wall.

Present on that day, in the mosque, was Faisal Husseini, a key Palestine Liberation

Organization intifada leader, who is normally not seen at the mosque on a day that is not a special day of prayer for the Muslims. But not present on that day were the Wakf security personnel who had been surreptitiously withdrawn from the area between the gates, at the Western edge of the Mount that overlooked the Western Wall and the Jewish pilgrims gathering before it. Forty feet above them, the Arab youths assembled and did what they had been gathered to do. They rioted. ([Ref. 6](#))

### **Summary: The Temple Mount Remains a Volatile Issue**

Even though the Temple Mount has been regained and is officially part of the State of Israel, it is still being profaned as far as the God of Israel is concerned. When the Mount fell into Jewish hands after the Six Day War, Israel took the Western Wall Area but left administration of the Mount to the Muslim Council of Elders. Israel also banned Jewish worship. The secular Jews did not care and many of the Orthodox Jews believe that the Third Temple would have to await the arrival of the Messiah. These issues remain stalemated to the present day.

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## **Current Preparations To Build A New Temple**

The following section contains illustrative quotes from the literature of various groups who have been involved one way or another in plans for the rebuilding of the Temple in recent decades. This author does not necessarily endorse nor condemn these statements, they are merely offered in the interest of giving a broad picture of the complexities of Temple Mount politics at the present time.

The various Jewish groups change frequently. Some fade away or move to other pursuits, others join forces for a time - but nothing remains very static for very long.

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### **TO ALL PERSONS OF THE JEWISH FAITH ALL OVER THE WORLD:**

A project to rebuild the Temple of God in Israel is now being started. With Divine Guidance and Help the "Temple" will be completed. Jews will be inspired to conduct themselves in such a moral way that our Maker will see fit to pay us a visit here on earth. Imagine the warm feeling that will be ours when this happy event takes place. "THIS IS MY GOD" is the book that was the inspiration for this undertaking. God will place in the minds of many person in all walks of Jewish life the desire to participate in this work. Executive talent, Administrations, and Workers on all levels are needed. All efforts will be anonymous. GOD will know those desiring to

participate.

Please write to Box M-917, The Washington Post. Under no circumstances send contributions. "GOD'S WILL WILL PREVAIL."

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The above advertisement appeared in the Washington Post, on May 21, 1967---before Jerusalem was liberated. The caption letters were 72 points - one inch - high. The ad occupied a space of eleven by eight inches.

Although the ban on visiting the Temple Mount is in effect it has not stopped those in Israel for thinking about the realization of a long lost dream, the rebuilding of the Temple. Once the city of Jerusalem was retaken this was no longer a pipe dream. Time magazine reported:

Since the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans in AD 70, Conservative and Orthodox Jews have beseeched God four times a week to 'renew our days' as they once were---a plea for the restoration of the Temple. Although Zionism was largely a secular movement, one of its sources was the prayers of the Jews for a return to Palestine so that they could build a temple . . . Learned Jewish opinion has long debated when and how the temple can be rebuilt. The great medieval philosopher Maimonides, in his Code of Jewish Law, argued that every generation of Jews was obliged to rebuild the temple if its site was ever retaken, if a leader descended from David could be found, and if the enemies of Jerusalem were destroyed. ([Ref. 7](#)).

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### **Why Rebuild the Temple?**

Number 20 of the 613 commandments in the Torah (according to Maimonides) calls for the building of a Temple building in Jerusalem if one does not exist or orders the maintenance of a Temple if it exists. Orthodox Jews during the diaspora call for the eventual building of the Temple in Jerusalem.

The question arises as to the incentives the Jewish people would have for constructing a new Temple. Why would they want to rebuild it? Two reasons come to mind. (1) The fulfillment of a national dream of the Jewish people. (2) A rallying point for the nation's religious and cultural heritage.

For centuries the Jews did not possess their homeland---they forced to wander as strangers and vagabonds across the face of the earth. Deep within the Jewish heart has

been a longing for a return to the land and a rebuilding of the Temple. The temple is also a symbol of prosperity granted them from heaven, and a reminder of better days that the nation had in the days of David and Solomon. Desire for the restoration of the Temple has been the prayer of the Orthodox Jew since the destruction of the Second Temple in AD 70.

A rebuilt temple could also be a unifying force for this small beleaguered nation. During their relatively new existence as a reborn nation Israel has experienced a series of major wars. A house of worship, especially a house of prayer for all the peoples as they First and Second Temples had been, could serve as a rallying point for Jews worldwide. Not only would this help unify the many Jewish factions that exist in Israel today, but the Jewish people feel deeply that the redemption of all mankind is tied to the redemption of their land. When Messiah comes, he will be the King and Savior of all the nations.

#### **Not a United Front by Any Means---"Two Jews Equals Three Opinions"**

In 1982, after years of disagreement about methods of approach, three groups of devout Jews, *The Jerusalem Temple Foundation*, *To the Mountain of the Lord*, and *The Faithful of the Temple Mount* combined their forces to plan for and build the Third Temple. More recently *The Temple Institute* has begun to build the sacred vessels to be used in the Third Temple. One yeshiva (*Yeshivot Ateret Cohanim*) is presently located in the Old City in the historic Torat Haim Yeshiva building. Prior to the Arab riots of 1936 this area of the Old City was a thriving Jewish community. The yeshiva's location places it not far from the spot the Holy of Holies (Kodesh Hakodoshim) once stood on the Temple Mount.

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The following is an extract from the constitution of The Jerusalem Temple Foundation:

#### **PURPOSES:**

- a) To undertake research into the history of Holy Places in Israel.
- b) To provide scientific means and equipment for the efficient investigation of such places and of archaeological sites.
- c) To study the religious, political, economic, social, cultural and ethnic aspects and implications of these investigations and explorations.

- d) To advance the learning and application of the scriptures.
- e) To work for the safeguarding and preservation of the integrity of Holy Places in Israel, and their restoration, with special emphasis on the Temple Mount.
- f) To provide a forum for authoritative discussion of matters falling within the Foundation's scope of interest.
- g) To publish the results and records of its discussions and research in order to endow the public with a wider knowledge of Holy Places and archaeological sites in Israel.
- h) To launch world-wide competitions for the design and construction of suitable edifices and similar projects in Israel.
- i) To raise funds for the promotion and development of these and allied activities.

It is true that some of the Temple Mount activists view the matter in more nationalistic than religious terms. They see the Temple Mount as part of the land of Israel. They believe that until the Mount is in Israeli control then Israel does not have complete sovereignty over its country. One of their poets, Uri Zvi Greenberg wrote, "Israel without the Mount---is not Israel. He who controls the Mount, controls the land of Israel."

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The Faithful of the Temple Mount, under the leadership of Israeli military hero and patriot Gershon Salomon, issued the following:

#### **A Jewish Prayer for All Peoples**

The Faithful of the Temple Mount have provided a prayer which they feel that all true believers in the God of Israel can pray.

A Prayer of the Nations from

#### **THE FAITHFUL of the TEMPLE MOUNT JERUSALEM**

Our Father which art in Heaven! Guard the children of all nations who perform Thy will and fear Thy great name. Bestow upon them Thy blessings for prosperity and brotherhood and peace. Instill in the hearts of all the faith that Thou art alone G-d in heaven above and on the earth below.

Let all men call on Thy name and serve Thee with undivided heart. Bring near that day on which a multitude of nations will go forth and say, "Come, let us go to the Mount of the Lord, to the House of the G-d of Jacob, and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths - for out of Zion shall go forth the Law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem."

Save they people Israel in the Holy Land, and grant her sons the strength to withstand the foes who rise against them. Open the eyes and hearts of their neighbors that they should know that only in Israel's peace will they enjoy peace. Let them understand that the Word of G-d came to the forefathers of this nation to grant them this Land - as it is written in the Law of Moses, and as was promised throughout the prophets - that He will gather them from their dispersion, settle them on their soil, renew their Sanctuary, and reestablish their Kingdom as of old.

Awaken the hearts of the Children of Israel for whom You descended upon Mount Sinai to give them the Law and its commandments by the hand of Moses - to observe all that is written in Thy Law, in order that they should succeed in all they do, and thus to hasten the coming of their salvation, and the salvation of the world. AMEN.

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### **Are Materials for the Third Temple Ready?**

For a number of years, especially back in the '70's, there were rumors that precut stones have been cut in America and shipped to Israel for the building of the Third Temple. Evangelist John Wesley White wrote:

Late in 1979 I was riding in Indiana with a local Presbyterian minister. At a certain point along the highway he informed me that we were driving past the gate of a company which purportedly handled a highly classified order of the finest building stones in the world. Sixty thousand tons of pre-cut stones had been shipped on 500 rail cars. They were allegedly bought by the Israeli Government, and had already arrived in Israel. ([Ref. 8](#))

Such claims are highly unlikely! Anyone who has ever visited Israel will immediately be impressed that stones are everywhere. In fact, Israel actually exports them, and they have the highest quality of pure white limestone in abundance! Whether precut stones have already been made in Israel is another matter. Though rumors abound, no concrete evidence has come forward to support this idea.

During 1982 military action in Lebanon, the Israeli Army discovered and captured huge stores of Russian and Syrian weaponry stored in secret bunkers and tunnels in

preparation for a Northern invasion. It was also reported by very reliable sources that a large supply of the famous Lebanese Cedar was also recovered and is safely stored away for use in construction of the Third Temple.

### **A New Priesthood**

If a new Temple is to be constructed then there must be a functioning priesthood to perform the proper rites and ceremonies. Such a priesthood is now in the works. In an old stone building in the Old City of Jerusalem, a small group of young scholars are preparing for the building of the Third Temple and the coming of the Messiah.

The founder of one particular yeshiva (school) is Motti Hacohen. Hacohen knew he was a priest but that never affected his life very much. Until, that is, the day he looked up from his opened Talmud while he was studying at a Yeshiva on the Golan Heights and saw a friend pouring over a tractate dealing with the laws of the temple and the priesthood.

Hacohen asked him why he was studying such obscure laws. His friend responded, "Why aren't you?"

He told Hacohen that he should be more interested in the Temple regulations seeing that he was from the priestly line. Hacohen decided to take up the challenge.

Hacohen then began a search for a yeshiva that could teach him matters concerning the rebuilding of the Temple. Finding none that would satisfy his needs Hacohen founded the Tora Kohanim.

On Good Friday, 1990, one hundred fifty devout Jews, members of the Yeshivot Ateret Cohanim, moved into four buildings in the Christian quarter of Jerusalem causing a protest from both Muslim and Christian groups. The site of the building, just around the corner from the church of the Holy Sepulchre, was chosen to help create Jewish settlements in the Old City of Jerusalem geographically near the Temple Mount. (The city is presently divided into separate quarters for Christians, Muslims, and Jews and each district's residents are very sensitive to outsiders moving into their territory for any reason).

### **Temple Sacrifices and Offerings**

The problem of restoring the sacrificial system is one that devout Jerusalem Jews have been researching with great zeal and diligent. In an article called, the "Significance of Sacrifice," Jewish writer Pinhas H. Pell writes:

Ambivalence in regard to the sacrificial cult permeates Jewish thought and literature from the time of the ancient pre-exilic prophets through the Psalms to the rabbis of the Talmud and Midrash and the major medieval philosophers, down to contemporary religious thinkers. It left its imprint on the liturgy and has been (and still is to some extent) the subject of heated debates.

It is generally thought that sacrifices of life were among the earliest and most profound expressions of the human desire to come as close as possible to God. While in English the verb "to sacrifice" means "to make sacred," the Hebrew word for "sacrifice" (korban, le-hakriv) is from the same root as "to come near, to approach. . . ."

Sacrifices do indeed present an esthetic, sometimes a moral problem to many modern Jews who are unable to envision being spiritually uplifted at the sight of slaughtered animals, spilled blood and burning incense. Yet, with all the reservations prophets, rabbis and philosophers have expressed about sacrifices they are indisputably an integral part of Torah legislation, as well as Jewish history in the First and Second Temples and are included in Jewish aspirations concerning the third temple, for whose speedy rebuilding Jews pray daily according to their traditional prayer book. ([Ref. 9](#))

The Jerusalem Post reports:

The modern Jew found it difficult to face the binding obligation to rebuild the sanctuary, combined with the great dreams linked with it. He has suppressed the demands they make on him.

He was hesitant to use religious language to describe the historic return to Zion and to national sovereignty. There are indeed a few exceptions to this, as for example, "the Third Temple," once used by Ben-Gurion or the excessive use of prophetic terminology of the "ingathering of the exiles" during the years of mass aliyah.

Far beyond the formal commandment, the yearning to behold an actual concrete expression of a central religious and national focal point permeates all Jewish history.

Another argument is that the rebuilding as postulated by Maimonides requires a certain order of events: 1) coming to the land; 2) appointment of a king from the house of David; 3) blotting out the descendants of Amalek; and only then 4) the building of the Temple. The counter argument claims that, while this is indeed the ideal order of events, the events themselves are not necessarily mutually interdependent and one must carry out whichever is possible at the time. ([Ref. 10](#))

Time magazine observed:

Next week Israel's Ministry of Religious Affairs will sponsor a first-ever Conference of Temple Research to discuss whether contemporary Jews are obligated to rebuild the Temple. However, several small organizations in Jerusalem believe the question is settled. They are zealously making preparation for the new Temple in spite of the doctrinal obstacles and the certainty of promoting Muslim fury.

Two Talmudic schools located near the Western Wall are teaching nearly two hundred students the elaborate details to Temple service. Other groups are researching the family lines of Jewish priests who alone may conduct sacrifices. Former Chief Rabbi Shlomo Goren, who heads another Temple Mount organization, believes his research has fixed location on the ancient Holy of Holies so that Jews can enter the Mount without sacrilege.

No group is more zealous than the Temple Institute, whose spiritual leader, fifty-year-old Rabbi Israel Ariel, was one of the first Israeli paratroopers to reach the Mount in 1967. "Our task," states the institute's American-born director, Zev Golan, "is to advance the cause of the Temple and prepare for its establishment, not just talk about it."

One difficulty is the requirement that priest purify their bodies with the cremated ashes of an unblemished red heifer before they enter the Temple. Following a go-ahead from the Chief Rabbinate, institute operatives spent two weeks in August scouting Europe for heifer embryos that will shortly be implanted into cows at an Israeli cattle ranch.

But historian David Solomon insists that a new Temple is essential: "It was the essence of our Jewish being, the unifying force of our people . . . but sooner or later, in a week or a century, it will be done. And we will be ready for it." He adds with quiet urgency, "Every day's delay is a stain on the nation." ([Ref. 11](#))

There were more expressions of Jewish desire to build upon the Temple Mount during 1990:

According to tradition, no Jew may step foot on the site of the Holy Temple in Jerusalem.

But this week, leading Israeli rabbis, including the former Ashkenazi Chief Rabbi Shlomo Goren ruled that while Jews may not step on holy soil, they are obliged to pray at a sanctuary to be established adjoining the site of the Holy of Holies.

The ruling touched off a storm in Muslim circles. Previously Jews had been forbidden

to even enter the Temple Mount. Muslims were allowed total control of the area. The temple Mount includes the Dome of the Rock and the El-Aksa Mosque.

According to Rabbi Goren, a 1967 survey of the Temple Mount shows the exact location of the First and Second Temples as well as the site of the Ark of the Covenant.

By elimination, the rabbi determined the exact areas on the Temple Mount where a Jewish sanctuary could be constructed without violation of the ancient decree not to tread on holy soil.

The synagogue of course would not interfere with Muslim areas of the Mount, Rabbi Goren said.

Earlier efforts by Jews to pray on the Temple Mount touched off clashes with police and Arabs on the Mount. Mayor Teddy Kollek said he feared that Jews praying on the Temple Mount might encounter violence, since Muslims would interpret the Jewish presence as provocation.

But Jews and Muslims conduct prayers side by side at the Cave of Machpeleh in Hebron, site of the tombs of the Patriarchs.

Kollek voiced opposition to the rabbinical action, declaring that "the clam in Jerusalem is a direct result of the 1967 decision not to alter the status of the rights of the various religious groups."

The action by Israel's rabbinate calling for a sanctuary to be built on the Temple Mount is a religious edict that has the authority of . . . Jewish Law. ([Ref. 6](#))

### **The Ark of the Covenant**

One of the main issues surrounding a Third Temple is the long lost Ark of the Covenant. What will be its place, if any, in the Third Temple? The last mention of the Ark is 2 Chronicles 35:3 where it is placed back into the Temple in the realm of King Josiah. There was no ark in the Second Temple. There is no concrete evidence today that the Ark still exists or that someone has it. Does the Ark exist? If it does will it appear before the Third Temple is consecrated?

Most Orthodox Jewish believers in Jerusalem who are working towards the building of the Third Temple believe that the Ark of the Covenant is safely hidden in a chamber under the Temple Mount. They feel certain God has preserved the Ark for 25 centuries and that it will be available when the Temple is restored. The issue of the

Ark, its history and present location (if it exists at all) is reserved for a later discussion.

### **The Ashes of the Red Heifer**

Some rabbis claim that one of the things necessary for a Third Temple is the ashes of the Red Heifer. Of all the sacrifices for sin mentioned in the Old Testament, only the slaying of the Red Heifer was "outside the camp," i.e., not in the temple. Numbers Chapter 19 describes this offering, and instructions for preparing water for ritual purification from the ashes of the sacrificed animal after it had been burned.

Red heifers without spot or blemish are today being bred and raised by at least one group in the United States, Rev. Clyde Lott who writes in a new 1995 Jewish publication, "The Restoration." ([Ref. 12](#))

American amateur archaeologist Vendyl Jones of Arlington, Texas, has for many years been searching in caves near Qumran for the ashes of the last red heifer sacrificed before the destruction of the temple in AD 70.

Authorities at The Temple Institute have stated, however, that Third Temple sacrifices and ritual cleansing can be accomplished (restored) without these old ashes if they are not found.

### **An Evangelical Group Gets Involved**

Entering into the dispute over the Temple Mount which previously had been entirely an issue between the Jews and Muslims came a small but vocal group the evangelical Christians. The following open letter appeared in the Jerusalem Post in 1983.

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### **OPEN LETTER TO THE PRIME MINISTER AND PEOPLE OF ISRAEL THE IMPRISONMENT OF RELIGIOUS ISRAELIS**

Thursday, March 10, witnessed a great setback to religious freedom in Israel---and throughout the world. We refer to the jailing of earnest, faithful sons of Israel---whose only crime was to try and pray upon the most sacred site of Judaism, The Temple Mount:

Our Father which art in heaven: Guard the children of all nations who perform thy will and fear they (sic) great name.

We, as evangelical Christians, find the imprisonment of these sons of Israel with the gates of Jerusalem, biblically unconscionable.

This comes as an international shock to vast segments of the Evangelical world. For the Jewish people to be restricted and imprisoned for such a noble design staggers the moral imagination.

Exclusive and erroneous Islamic claims to this most holy site, militate against historical and biblical injunction. The People of Israel, through Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, David, Solomon, Ezra, Nehemiah, Haggai, Zechariah, and the early church (Stephen, Paul, James and Jesus Himself) with many others, paid the most holy price for this sanctified space. The Almighty desires it to be a House of Prayer for all peoples. (Isaiah 56:7) If the sons and daughters of Zion are restricted access to Zion's holy hill, then the return of His chosen people to their land of promise is in vain--for the heart of Jerusalem awaits the foot of the Jew, not the trodding down by the gentiles.

Mr. Prime Minister, your brethren have considered their ways and gone up to the Mountain of the Lord. Therefore, we ask you to intervene on behalf of Israel's faithful who demonstrate their divine privilege. Your people, who gave to the gentiles the knowledge of the one true God, must be allowed full freedom of worship within the holy boundaries of the Mount.

May the Almighty strengthen the resolve of your government to do that which is right in the sight of the Lord.

. . . and the gentiles shall come to Thy light  
and kings to the brightness of Thy rising. . .  
the forces of the gentiles shall come upon Thee  
. . . they shall come up with acceptance on mine altar,  
and I will glorify the house of my glory.  
(Isaiah 60)

Be strong, Mr. Prime Minister, and "all ye people of Eretz Israel, saith the Lord, "and work; for I am with you, saith the Lord of Hosts." (Haggai 2:4)

## YOUR EVANGELICAL FRIENDS IN AMERICA

Committee of Concerned Evangelicals  
for Freedom of Worship on the Temple Mount  
P.O. Box 6081; Norman, Oklahoma 73070

Terry Risenhoover, Doug Krieger, Dr. James DeLoach; Co-Chairmen  
The Feast of Freedom--Pessah, 1983 (5743)< P>

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This same group at the same time formed a Jerusalem Temple Foundation branch in America, but without the sanction and endorsement of the Jewish group of the same name in Jerusalem. Those involved were evangelical Christians who, for various motives, want to help the Jews gain access to the Temple Mount and rebuild a Third Temple. One of the members even considered himself to be "the new Nehemiah." This group lobbied extensively on behalf of the various Temple Mount groups for some months beginning in 1983. Anti-Semitic and Anti-Israel groups made an enormous mountain out of the mole-hill activities of this evangelical group. The group ceased to exist altogether after a few years and as far as anyone can tell only very modest sums of evangelical funds were ever contributed to the cause of rebuilding the Jewish temple.

### **More Media Reaction and Response**

Segments of the international press immediately took an interest in the link between the Evangelical Christians and those in Israel who are associated with making the Temple Mount a free forum for worship.

In the magazine, *The New Republic*, an article appeared entitled "The Temple Mount Plot" by Barbara and Michael Ledeen. Over the title of the article the headline read, What do Christian and Jewish fundamentalists have in common? The article begins as follows:

A casual observer might be excused for believing that nearly all of the recent violence in Israel has been part of the usual cycle of Arab-Israeli conflict. The observer would be wrong. Though some of the recent acts, such as the plans to place time bombs on Arab buses in Jerusalem, seem to be the work of extremist Israeli nationalists, much of the destructive intent is fueled by a mixture of nationalist politics, messianic longing, and the search for roots. In fact, some of the current extremism is a direct outgrowth of the ancient forecast of the Apocalypse.

The targets of the most spectacular incidents over the past months have been the Muslim authorities and the area they control in Jerusalem, but for the most part the people who planned or participated in the attacks are the violent fringe of an informal movement that stretches from the United States to the Middle East, and encompasses millions of evangelical Christians as well as some Israeli Jews. This unlikely coalition rests upon a common belief that the Final Days are upon us. ([Ref. 13](#))

Other reporters went on to write concerning this supposed plot or "conspiracy" between Christian and Jewish forces to rebuild a Third Temple. The Jerusalem Post even ran a special supplement on September 30, 1983 about these new Temple Mount controversies. One of the articles in the supplement, entitled "The Christian Connection," had this to say:

While Gush Emunim, Yeshivot Ateret Cohanim and other Jewish groups cast their eyes in the direction of the Temple Mount, evangelical Christians abroad are digging into their pockets to help things along.

So far, the Christian Community's support for the construction of the Third Temple has been somewhat discreet. But there are growing numbers of Christians, many organized into small churches and larger groups, who see the construction of a Third Temple as the cornerstone of their beliefs.

These are evangelical or Pentecostal Christians who believe the prophecies in the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament indicate that the building of the Third Temple on the Temple Mount is part of a divine plan leading up to the end of days.

Though there is a clear divergence in religious belief between these Christians and Jews who work towards the rebuilding of the Temple, they willingly and enthusiastically cooperate. Indeed, the Christians are encouraged by their leaders to contribute towards such groups as the Jerusalem Temple Foundation.

Such a view was stated by Stanley Goldfoot, activist and "foreign minister" of the Faithful of the Temple Mount who, in an earlier interview said, 'I tell them there is no dialogue. I make it clear that I can't accept their views and they can't accept mine. If they prepared to help us openly, then we're prepared to accept it. ([Ref. 14](#))

A World Council of Churches periodical entitled "The Link" (a journal funded by Arab oil interests) commented:

Two violent attempts to "liberate" the Temple Mount recently have taken place. . . . According to Middle East correspondent Grace Halsell, "Increasingly Zionist fanatics--Israelis and Americans--are plotting to destroy Islam's sacred Al-Aqsa Mosque and the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem. It is said that many of Israel's highest officials sanction Zionist plans to destroy the mosque, the site from whence Muhammad ascended into heaven, and to build a Jewish temple there."

Christian Zionists, uncritical of any action undertaken by the Israeli government, apparently have the same rationale for supporting such actions. ([Ref. 15](#))

These articles are representative of items that have appeared in print which have attempted to link Evangelical Christians to those groups of Jews who are attempting to "liberate" the Temple Mount. Only a small handful of evangelical believers were involved and it is now clear that no substantial sums of money were raised or donated to the Jewish groups. Evangelical ties with Jewish Third Temple groups have been almost entirely dialogues based on common interests in the Bible and the common heritage Christians share together in their hopes for the coming of the world's true and final Messiah.

### **Disinformation and Misinformation Abound**

One fallout from bad press over the years is the disinformation and misinformation that has appeared in the press concerning Christians and the Temple Mount. The Jerusalem Post reported:

... recently the Syrians have tried to make their mark by taking new directions. They have taken aim at Christians who support Israel. They have made a particular target the International Christian Embassy in Jerusalem, which represents in its own telling way the many millions of Evangelical Christians around the world.

Thus in a recent issue of the Syrian Times, the Rev. Jan Willem van der Hoeven, one of the prominent leaders of the Embassy was accused of telling the Jerusalem Post that "he believes in rebuilding the Temple on the debris of the holy al-Aksa Mosque."

That Rev. Wm. van der Hoeven told The Post in an interview just the opposite proved no obstacle for the propagandists in Damascus. . .

The Syrians are evidently so disturbed by such "Biblical Christians" who have lent their support to Israel, that they are prepared to malign them and distort their views.

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### **MORE PUBLISHED STATEMENTS BY JEWISH GROUPS**

#### **The Sanhedrin of the Sixth Millennium**

G-D CREATED THE HEAVENS AND THE EARTH AND ALL THAT IS THEREIN, IN SIX DAYS. AND G-D SAW EVERYTHING THAT HE HAD MADE AND, BEHOLD, IT WAS VERY GOOD. AND G-D BLESSED THE SEVENTH DAY AND SANCTIFIED IT, AND SET IT APART FOR MAN TO CELEBRATE HIS CREATION(GENESIS). THE JEWISH PEOPLE DATE THE COMPLETION OF THE UNIVERSE 5745 YEARS AGO. THUS OUR ERA IS THE SIXTH MILLENIUM AFTER THE CREATION. THE WISDOM OF OUR SAGES PRESCRIBES THAT EACH DAY OF CREATION REPRESENTS A MILLENIUM (1000 YEARS) AND THEREFORE OUR ERA IS THE EVE OF THE SEVENTH DAY, THAT IS, THE SABBATH EVE. THIS IS THE EVE OF THE "PERFECTION OF DAYS," THE EVE OF THE COMING OF THE TRUE MESSIAH-SON-OF-DAVID.

## **HISTORY of the SANHEDRIN**

The SANHEDRIN (from the Greek meaning "assembly") has its origins in the Exodus from Egypt, when G-d commanded Moses to assemble 70 Elders to share the leadership of the nation with him. This Council of 71 assumed all legislative and judicial powers throughout the history of the Israelites, until the destruction of the First Temple.

The GREAT SANHEDRIN---Men of the Great Assembly---was instituted by Ezra on the return of the Jewish People from the exile in Babylon and the rebuilding of the Temple. It convened in the Chamber of Hewn Stone adjoining the Inner Temple Courts. The Presidency of the Sanhedrin was conferred on the High Priest or on "he who excels all others in wisdom." Though the GREAT SANHEDRIN had full legislative and executive powers, capital punishment was pronounced only in the rarest of instances. During the Roman occupation, the powers of the Sanhedrin was whittled down to matters of ritual, and its authority was further impaired by internal strife between rival factions. Though the Sanhedrin was dissolved by the Romans in 66 CE, four years before the destruction of the Second Temple, traces of it persisted in various forms throughout Jewish history in the Land of Israel.

Outstanding leaders of the GREAT SANHEDRIN included Shimon ben Shetah, who introduced legislation for universal education, women's rights, the administration of trial courts, acceptance of testimony; Rabbi Hillel whose dictum, "That which is hateful to you do not do to others" was enunciated as the quintessence of Jewish teaching.

The rebirth of the State of Israel has given rise to ardent hopes for the re-establishment of the GREAT SANHEDRIN as the guiding light for the Jewish people.

## **THE TEMPLE OF JERUSALEM**

Even as the Jewish people were crossing the Sinai desert, out of the bondage of Egypt on their way to the Promised Land, G-d said: "Build me a Temple and I shall dwell amongst you." (Exodus 25:2)

Ever since those days, the Temple of Jerusalem has been the soul of the spiritual and national existence of the Jewish People. The Temple was the center of the royal authority of the Davidic and Hasmonean dynasties. It was the high point of all religious ceremony and the seat of the High Priest. Its Chamber of Hewn Stone was the convening place of the SANHEDRIN, the legislative and judicial authority of the Nation.

Twice the Temple was destroyed and the Jewish People dispersed, yet the Spirit of the Temple in all its implications sustained them through their bitter exile.

The prophecy of redemption is being fulfilled in our days with the Ingathering of the Exiles and the Liberation of the Land. Yet the great task of rebuilding the Temple is still before us.

It is written that the Temple of Jerusalem will be rebuilt by a King of the Davidic line, who will be installed by the High Court of Seventy-One, that is, the SANHEDRIN.

"And it shall come to pass in the end of days that the mountain of G-d's house shall be set over all other mountains and lifted high above the hills and all the nations shall come streaming, For out of Zion shall go forth the Torah and the word of G-d from Jerusalem." (Isaiah 2:2-4)

#### **The SANHEDRIN of the SIXTH MILLENIUM**

For the prophecies to be fulfilled and the Temple rebuilt, the Nation must have a form of leadership, political and spiritual, worthy of the honour of such a task. It must be a Torah-based system of government, that is, the SANHEDRIN.

Like its predecessors, the NEW SANHEDRIN shall consist of 71 judges excelling in whom; understanding and knowledge of Torah, international law, physics and mathematics, macro and micro-economics, cybernetics, human sciences, and conversant with many cultures and languages. They will be people of exceptional moral fibre, maturity and human compassion.

By virtue of its collective acumen and wisdom, the NEW SANHEDRIN will be the guiding light which alone will be capable of leading the Jewish Nation to fulfill its mission and rebuild the Temple.

#### **THE SANHEDRIN NOW**

The SANHEDRIN is needed today to provide the Jewish Nation with the political and spiritual leadership it must have to achieve the long-awaited redemption of the People and the Land.

The SANHEDRIN is needed today to restore Torah law and Jurisprudence to the courts of the Jewish State.

The SANHEDRIN is needed today because it is the Torah-ordained and only authentic form of government for the Jewish People in their Sovereign State. All other

forms of government are foreign to the spirit of the Nation and only lead to waste of the human resources of the Jewish People, to corruption of the moral fibre of the nation, to disorder. Witness the present situation.

The SANHEDRIN is needed today to reunite the Hebrew Nation and lead it to the heights of glory for which it is destined.

THE ISRAEL TORAH FOUNDATION AIMS AND MEANS:

- To prepare the ground in Israel for the re-establishment of the SANHEDRIN in our time, that is, in the era of the Sixth Millenium.
- To raise Torah-consciousness through special education programs, seminars, congresses.
- To establish an Information and Research Center, partly in conjunction with Bar-Ilan University, where all relevant data and its applications will be computerized.
- To design Teaching Modules relevant to the SANHEDRIN and the Jerusalem Temple for distribution to educational institutions.
- To reverse negative influences undermining the Nation's faith in Torah and in the Jewish heritage.
- To expose and combat manifestations of anti-Semitism in all its insidious forms, inside and outside Israel.
- To restore Torah jurisprudence as the basis of the Israel legal system.

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**A statement by the Temple Mount Faithful Group:**

**THE TEMPLE MOUNT AND LAND OF ISRAEL FAITHFUL MOVEMENT**

**LEADERSHIP**

The founder and leader of the Temple Mount and Land of Israel Faithful Movement is Gershon Salomon. In his private life, Gershon is an expert researcher and lecturer in Middle Eastern studies, specializing in the history of the national movement of the Kurdish people. He is an officer in the Israel Defense Force. Gershon is a 10th generation Jerusalemite. He is descended from Rabbi Avraham Solomon Zalman Zoref who settled in Jerusalem in 1811. Rabbi Zoref was the first Jewish pioneer in Jerusalem to start the redemptive process of the people and the land by rebuilding the waste land. He even sent out one of his sons to locate the ten lost tribes to bring them back to the Land of Israel, because he knew the return of the ten tribes was a condition for the redemptive process. Rabbi Zoref was assassinated by Arabs who thought they could stop this Godly process.

Even as a child, Gershon Salomon knew that God was calling him to continue the work for the redemption of the people of Israel. Gershon was involved as a youth in the War of Independence. He was arrested at age 11 by the British Mandatory police. Later when he joined the IDF, he led a company in the Golan Heights. In 1958, in a battle with the Syrian Army, Mr. Salomon was injured accidentally when, in the heat and confusion of battle, he was run over by a tank. Syrian soldiers are trained to shoot "again" any wounded Israeli soldiers. When they were about to shoot "again" Mr. Salomon, they all suddenly ran away. Later these Syrians soldiers reported to UN officers that they had seen thousands of angels around this IDF officer and had, therefore, fled. It was at this time that Mr. Salomon heard the voice of God speaking to him that He was not yet finished with him. Gershon Salomon understood this as a divine call to consecrate himself to the work of the Temple Mount.

After one year in the hospital, Mr. Salomon had recovered sufficiently to return to his unit even though he now walked on crutches. He continued his service in defense of the land of Israel. He feels that the greatest moment of his life, thus far, was his participation in the liberation of the Temple Mount and Jerusalem during the Six-Day War. He believes at that moment that the circle was closed between his generation and the generation of the destruction of the Temple in 70 CE

Moshe Dayan, the defense minister of Israel in 1967, made a terrible decision by turning control of the Temple Mount to the Muslim authorities of Jerusalem. Since that time Muslim Arabs have maintained control of this crucial Biblical site. Gershon Salomon recognized the tragedy of this action and formed the Temple Mount Faithful organization. Since that time he has dedicated himself to the vision of consecrating the Temple Mount to the Name of God, to removing the Muslim shrines placed there as a symbol of Muslim conquest, to the soon rebuilding of the Third Temple there, and the Godly redemption of the People and the Land of Israel.

#### **LONG TERM OBJECTIVES**

1. Liberating the Temple Mount from Arab (Islamic) occupation. The Dome of the Rock and the Al Aqsa mosque were placed on this Jewish or Biblical holy site as a specific sign of Islamic conquest and domination. The Temple Mount can never be consecrated to the Name of God without removing these pagan shrines. It has been suggested that they be removed, transferred to and rebuilt at Mecca.
2. Consecrating the Temple Mount to the Name of God so that it can become the moral and spiritual center of Israel, of the Jewish people and of the entire world according to the words of all the Hebrew prophets. It is envisioned that the consecration of the Temple Mount and the Temple itself will focus Israel on (a) fulfilling the vision and mission given at Mt. Sinai for Israel to be a chosen people separate unto God, a holy nation, and a nation of priests, and (b) becoming a light unto all the nations (Isaiah 42:6) so that the Name of God may be revered by all nations and the Biblical way of life may be propagated throughout the world.
3. Rebuilding the Third Temple in accordance with the words of all the Hebrew prophets. This temple will be a house of prayer for the people of Israel and all nations.
4. Providing a Biblical point of assembly in order that all Israel may fulfill the commandment to assemble three times annually at the times of the Lord's festivals and at the place where God established His Name forever.
5. Making Biblical Jerusalem the real, undivided capital of the state of Israel.
6. Rejecting false "peace talks" which will result in the dividing of Israel and the breaking of God's covenant. God promised to Abraham and to his seed that the land and the borders of Israel are eternal and cannot be divided and given to other people and nations.
7. Supporting the settlements in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the Golan Heights as they are holy. No one is allowed to break the Word and the Will of God by commanding the settlers to leave. In the Biblical era, God commanded the people of Israel to settle the land completely. This command is applicable today. The holy connection and covenant between God, the People of Israel and the Land of Israel is eternal.

#### **SHORT TERM OBJECTIVES**

1. To strengthen the organizational structure of the movement in Jerusalem in order to pursue its long-term objectives.
2. To raise the awareness of the people of Israel to the significance of their nation in

God's plan of redemption. This will be accomplished in a number of ways including (a) youth education, (b) formation of youth clubs, (c) publication and propagation of relevant educational materials.

3. To demonstrate the fulfillment of the TANACH to the people of Israel.
4. To publicly proclaim the message of the Temple Mount and Land of Israel Movement in newspapers, flyers, posters, newsletters, radio and television.
5. To demonstrate publicly to raise awareness of Israel to the issue of the Third Temple, the Temple Mount and the Land of Israel.
6. To buy a house in the Old City (Biblical Jerusalem) near the Temple Mount to establish a spiritual and educational center to be used by everyone. The four-ton cornerstone will be stored and exhibited on this site. This first stone of the Third Temple will soon be laid.
7. To organize conferences for the study of the issues dealing with the Temple Mount and the Third Temple.

#### **VISION OF REDEMPTION**

The Temple Mount and Land of Israel Faithful Movement understands the phenomenon of modern Israel as the beginning of the redemption of the world. Two and one-half millennia ago, the Hebrew prophets spoke that in the "last days" God would regather His people from all the lands where He had scattered them (Isaiah 43:6-7). For the last 100 years the Jewish people have been returning to and rebuilding Zion. Today Israel is again the dynamic center of Jewish life across the world. The regathering is not yet complete. Ezekiel prophesied that God would "leave none of them there any longer." (Ezekiel 39:28b)

It is the view of the Temple Mount and Land of Israel Faithful that the redemption will proceed in an orderly fashion according to God's plan. First is the foundation of the modern state of Israel and the miraculous victories that God gave the people of Israel in the wars against 22 Arab enemy states. Second is the regathering of the people of Israel from all over the world to the Promised Land. Third is the liberation and consecration of the Temple Mount and fourth is the building of the Third Temple. The final step is the coming of the King of Israel, Messiah Ben David.

The existence of the state of Israel and the return of the people of God to the Promised Land is the biggest Godly event and miracle in the history of mankind-ever. This was predicted by the prophets of Israel. We are calling all the nations to link arms in

support of this people and the State of Israel to help her complete this process of redemption. We are not allowed to forget that the redemption of the people of Israel is a condition for the redemption of the earth. Also, we remember what God said over 4000 years ago to Abraham, the father of the Israelites: "I will bless those who bless you and curse those who curse you."

#### **POLICY STATEMENT**

The following are some statements of fundamental policy of the Temple Mount and Land of Israel Faithful:

1. Israel is the elect nation of God, sovereignly chosen for His purpose as a vessel through which redemption will be accomplished.
2. The Land of Israel (Biblical borders) was given specifically to the people of Israel and to no other nation. Israel is not permitted to give any of this land to any group for any purpose since the land is a grant to Israel from God Himself. Any division of the Land and the giving of it to another people represents a breach of the Covenant with God.
3. It is the distinct privilege and responsibility of every Jewish person to return to the Land of Israel and to directly participate in the redemption process. Anyone not exercising this privilege will lose it.
4. The Temple Mount and Land of Israel Faithful Movement is dedicated to the fulfillment of every detail of God's commandments as recorded in the TANACH.

#### **CHALLENGE TO BELIEVERS FROM THE NATIONS**

1. The work of God in His redemption process does not affect Israel alone but, indeed, all nations will directly benefit from His blessing. Therefore, all who have placed hope in the Scriptures and have faith in the One true God are invited to participate in the activities of the Temple Mount and Land of Israel Faithful Movement.
2. You are challenged also to contribute financially to the work of the Temple Mount and Land of Israel Faithful Movement. All work done for the organization is done by volunteers. There are no salaried employees. Annual financial statements are available upon request by contributors.

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## **A STATEMENT BY THE TEMPLE INSTITUTE IN JERUSALEM:**

### **The Prophecy of the Messianic Era**

"Jerusalem is the light of the world...and who is the light of Jerusalem? The Holy One, Blessed be He." (Bereshit Rabbah 59.8)

Jerusalem. No other city is known by so many names to so many people: Eternal City, City of Peace, City of Gold - and no other city is referred to as the "City of God"... a place of unique sanctity. Jerusalem is the focus of the spiritual energies of a large segment of mankind, and at its heart lies its greatest secret - the enigma of the Holy Temple.

Perhaps the first step towards understanding the significance of the Temple and all that it represents is the realization that it was not merely a magnificent building rooted in Jerusalem's ancient Biblical past, but rather, the physical manifestation of a vast idea which existed even before the creation of the world.

The origin of the idea of the Holy Temple can be traced to the beginning of time, the very dawn of creation. To the days of Adam, the first man, and his descendants. We can follow its winding thread through the time of Noah, builder of the ark and renewer of life after the flood. And, it was in the days of Abraham, the father of the Jewish people, that the holy site was initially selected. Later, in the time of King David and King Solomon---the builders of the First Temple - it was this very spot which was transformed into the center of global spirituality.

Since the last destruction and the flames that engulfed the Second Temple, the world has awaited the establishment of the Third Temple and with it the fulfillment of the words of the Prophet Isaiah:

"And it shall come to pass in the last days. that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established at the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all of the nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come. and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob. and he will teach us of his ways, and we shall walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth Torah, and the word of God from Jerusalem " (Isaiah 2:2, 3).

To witness the fulfillment of this ancient vision is a lifelong desire shared by all peoples - not only the Jews, who have longed through all their wanderings to return and rebuild Jerusalem from its ruins and to re-establish the Sanctuary of God in its midst.

The education of countless generations has been steeped in these verses. Isaiah's words formed the inspiration and driving force behind many diverse movements throughout world history, all of which centered around one purpose and objective: Jerusalem, the Holy City; Jerusalem, where the promised ultimate good shall be fulfilled; Jerusalem, which will once again be transformed into the spiritual center of all mankind.

It is in this future Jerusalem that the Shechinah, the Divine Glory of God, will again reside, and where the spirit of prophecy will once again be restored. And it is here that the Kingdom of God, Creator of all that exists, will be revealed to the world, and all of humanity will come to serve Him. Here every individual may be purified of sin and can rectify his very essence. In the future Holy Temple, each will pour out his heart in prayer before the Creator, and will hear the melodies of the Levites as they sing before God and His altar; and there each man may bring an offering to acknowledge God's ever-present, constant kindness.

The Prophet Isaiah continues:

"And I shall bring them to My holy mountain, and make them joyful in My house of prayer: Their burnt offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted on My altar; for My house shall be called a house of prayer for all people." (56:7)

### **The Concept of The Temple:**

#### **One of Seven Secrets Hidden in the Blueprints of Creation**

The sages teach that the notion of the Temple is concealed in the plans for the very foundation of the world, and was a factor in the Divine plan of creation. As the Talmud explains, God's anticipation of its eventual establishment even preceded creation:

"Seven things were contemplated (By the Holy One, Blessed be He) before creation:

Torah.  
Repentance,  
the Garden of Eden and

Gehinnom,  
the Throne of Glory,  
the Holy Temple and  
the Messiah's identity." (BT Pesachim 51:A)

The sages wish to tell us that by probing the nature of these seven elements, we can come to understand the purpose of creation.

### Understanding These Seven Elements

#### 1-2) Torah and Repentance:

This illustrates that the idea of the Torah existed before time, and was one of the central objectives behind the creation.

Before man was created God knew that "the impulse of man's heart is evil from his youth," (Gen. 7:21) and that he was destined to sin and stumble. This is an integral part of human nature.

Accordingly, before anything existed the Torah was prepared to guide him along his path through life. In similar fashion, the Torah's counterpart, the concept of repentance, was also prepared in advance of man, so that one who transgresses the will of his Creator has a path to return to Him. This too was forged into the very foundation of the world to provide man with a remedy for sin.

#### 3-4) The Garden of Eden and Gehinnom:

The concepts of the Garden of Eden and Gehinnom also reflect a key factor in the purpose of creation: reward and punishment. The reward, represented by the Garden of Eden, for those who fulfill the commandment of God; the punishment for transgressing His will Gehinnom.

#### 5) The Holy Temple:

The next element in the Divine blueprint for creation is the Holy Temple. At this stage all of the factors in the plan mentioned previously are actually united:

Torah: For the seat of the Sanhedrin, the Supreme Court of Israel and highest body of wisdom, was in the Temple. From the Sanhedrin the knowledge of Torah was transmitted to all of Israel, as mentioned in the verse above, "For out of Zion shall go

forth Torah, and the word of God from Jerusalem." It is for this reason that the two Tablets of the Law which contained the original commandments of God as revealed at Sinai were housed in the Temple's Holy of Holies: signifying that the Temple was literally the source of Torah knowledge.

And Repentance: For at the same time, the Temple is the unique place of repentance. When one stumbles and sins, he brings his offering to the Temple and places his hands on the sacrifice, while confessing the error of his thoughts and deeds. After it is offered on the altar, the individual leaves, cleansed and purified as a newborn infant. This enables him to continue his worldly endeavors in the pursuit of righteousness. The sacrifice has no effect unless it is accompanied by thoughts of repentance.

The Holy Temple appears in this Divine cosmic plan precisely because it represents the apex of human longing: The ability for man to engage in a direct relationship with God. The world awaits the day when the Temple in Jerusalem will once again be the global center of spiritual values. At this one spot on Earth, unlike any other, it will be revealed to all that "God is One and His Name is One." (Zechariah 14:9)

All will converge upon Jerusalem to receive the truth of Torah and to return to the way of God in sincere repentance---to atone in the Holy Temple and to merit the higher consciousness which will be revealed at that time: the spirit of Divine Inspiration.

## 6) The Throne of Glory: The Heavenly Jerusalem

"The Jerusalem below corresponds to the heavenly Jerusalem directly above... (BT Ta'anit 5:A; Zohar 183:B)

The rabbis make many references throughout the Talmud and Midrashim, which indicate the existence of a heavenly Jerusalem. The meaning is clear---the holiness of the earthly Jerusalem of this world has its source in another Jerusalem, a spiritual entity aloft of its physical counterpart. The one below is a direct parallel of the one above: The Godly Jerusalem. In the heavenly Jerusalem, a sublime spiritual Holy Temple exists where the Shechinah is revealed. This is the place of the Almighty's Throne of Glory.

This celestial structure is another of the primordial Divine thoughts which preceded the world. God arranged it so that the physical Holy Temple, to which will flow all the earth's multitudes, should be nourished and sustained by the Throne of Glory above.

## **The Temple: Gateway to Heaven**

In his dream, the patriarch Jacob sees "... a ladder set upon the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven..." (Genesis 28:12)

In the morning he opens his eyes and cries aloud: "How awesome is this place! This is none other than the House of God, and this is the gate of heaven." (ibid. 17) In his prophetic dream Jacob saw the earthly Holy Temple set opposite the Throne of Glory. Jacob then erects a stone monument and anoints it with oil, effectively dedicating the site of the future Temple: First, Second and Third.

The Holy Temple is the gateway to heaven for every human being, where he is summoned to approach God. As the world advances with more sophisticated techniques in travel and communications, the moment approaches when the denizen of the most far-flung location, as far away from Jerusalem as can be imagined, can come from that great distance and appear before his Creator to purify himself and come in contact with the holy spark within.

Every human being is created in God's image - "In the image of God He created man." (Genesis 9:7) Therefore the Divine spark of holiness is alive in each of us. How much easier will it be to unmask this spark in the dwelling place of God's Glory...each one will come up to Jerusalem to recharge his spiritual energy, to reveal his own unique essence, and then to return home with the spiritual nourishment needed to continue serving his own special purpose in the world.

## 7) The Messiah's Identity

The seventh level of the Divine plan the Talmud refers to is the identity of the messiah. This is the summit of the seven elements and the culmination of God's pre-creation thought. The messiah seals this entire design by bringing each preceding step to fruition. He is the master teacher of the Torah and commandments who will bequeath these ethical values to the human race. It is he who will succeed in establishing the earthly Kingdom of God and who will aid in bringing about the collective repentance of man. In the Messianic Era, justice will prevail on earth:

"... And with the breath of his lips he shall slay the wicked... and righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins. and faithfulness the girdle of his reins." (Isaiah 11:4-5)

It is in this period that reward and punishment shall be meted out: "The Garden of Eden" for the righteous, and "Gehinnom" for the wicked. And under the messiah's leadership, Jerusalem shall be reinstated as the spiritual capital of the world with the Temple at its heart.

This is the general pattern of God's plan, but it contains many ups and downs. Twice, the Temple did stand in Jerusalem - only to be destroyed; it is the Third Temple which is anticipated to bring the process to its conclusion...with the appearance of the messiah. The great expectation is for the Temple which will never be destroyed.

This yearning can be appreciated as a sincerely heartfelt desire... but it should not be mistaken for a precondition. For the Temple is not only a lofty idea which beckons to us...it is also a mitzvah, a precept of the Torah which is applicable at all times, regardless of when the messiah appears.

As Maimonides writes in his classic Letter on Religious Persecution, "Not one of any of the commandments of the Torah is dependent upon the messiah's arrival."

Based upon this understanding it stands to reason that a situation could arise wherein a third Temple could be built in Jerusalem and the messiah has still not yet arrived. This concurs with the opinion expressed in the Jerusalem Talmud: "The [third] Holy Temple will in the future be re-established before the establishment of the Kingdom of David." (JT Ma'aser Sheni 29)

From:*The Odyssey of the Third Temple*, Rabbi Yisrael Ariel, translated by Chaim Richman, G. Israel Publications and Productions, Ltd., The Temple Institute, 1992)

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## **FINAL SUMMARY**

Today the fragile peace that prevails on the Temple Mount grows more and more tenuous to this hour. Certain groups are clearly preparing to build a Third Temple. The Government of Israel is determined to keep things as they are. Christians who take their New Testaments seriously believe the Third Temple will indeed soon be rebuilt and the status quo is bound to change. The power and influence of a billion Muslim are committed not only to maintaining control of the Temple Mount, but moving out to conquer of all of Israel and then the world in the name of Allah. Bible believers know how the story will end, but the unfolding of the story is exciting indeed - almost on a daily basis.

The above information was mostly taken from news releases, brochures and reports of events in Jerusalem from 1967 to about 1990. Some of this material is not up to date. Web sites for some of the groups described above are listed on the [Temple Mount](#) home page. For current events and news items regarding the Temple Mount see [Recent Events, \(Fall 1996\)](#).

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## **End Notes**

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