

The Third Temple

When will it be built?

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The Bible clearly teaches that a new temple — which will be called The Third Temple — will be built in the future. The First Temple was the one that Solomon built and which was destroyed in 586 BC. The Second Temple (516 BC to 70 AD) was built after the Jews returned from Babylonian captivity. The platform on which it sat was greatly expanded and beautified by King Herod, as was the temple itself, but since the sacrifices were never stopped during this renovation and expansion, the new temple was still considered to be The Second Temple.

The Third Temple will exist during the Great Tribulation. Daniel refers to this temple when he says that “*the prince who is to come*” (the Antichrist) will enter it and stop the sacrifices in the middle of the Tribulation (Daniel 9:27). The Apostle Paul mentions it when he declares that the “*man of lawlessness*” will profane the temple by entering it and declaring himself to be God (2 Thessalonians 2:3-4). The Third Temple is also mentioned in the book of Revelation when John is told to measure it — a symbolic way of telling him to assess its spiritual condition (Revelation 11:1-2).

This raises the question as to precisely when the temple will be rebuilt. The Bible does not reveal the answer to this question. All it says for certain is that the temple will be in existence when the Antichrist reveals himself (2 Thessalonians 2:3-4), and that will be in the middle of the Tribulation (Daniel 9:27). Since this will be only three and a half years into the Tribulation, many have concluded that the temple will likely be rebuilt before the Tribulation begins, because how could such a magnificent building be constructed in such a short period of time? But this conclusion overlooks the fact that the temple can be literally resurrected overnight! That’s because the Jews plan to erect a tent temple like the Tabernacle of Moses, and they are ready to do so at any moment. Everything has been prepared. Once this temporary temple is put up, they will resume the sacrifices and then start building a more permanent structure around and above the temporary one.

Currently there are two major obstacles to the reconstruction of The Third Temple. One pertains to its location. The next temple can only be built where the two previous temples stood because the Holy of Holies must be on the exact same spot. But no one knows for sure where the previous temples were located on the Temple Mount. Most scholars believe that they stood where the Dome of the Rock currently stands. That conclusion may be wrong, but there is no way to prove the exact location without conducting archeological excavations on the Temple Mount, something which is currently prohibited by the Muslims. If The Third Temple is to be built where the Dome of the Rock now stands, then that Muslim structure must first of all be removed either by Man or God. It could, of course be burned to the ground by a saboteur, or it could be destroyed by an earthquake.

The second obstacle is the attitude of the Jewish people and their leaders. Currently, there is no desire among them to build a third temple. The average Israeli is very secular. He knows that any attempt to build a third temple would result in immediate war with the Muslims. Only a handful of ultra-Orthodox Jews have a passion for The Third Temple. They are the ones who have made all the preparations. But they have no popular support. Something will have to happen to create a surge of nationalistic pride that will demand a new temple. This catalytic event could be the discovery of the Ark of the Covenant.

There is a distinct possibility that the ancient temples were not located where the Dome of the Rock currently sits. There is strong evidence that their location was to the north of the Dome and that the sacrificial altar inside the Dome was the one that Solomon built in “*the middle of the court*” to handle the thousands of special sacrifices which he offered to the Lord on the day The First Temple was dedicated (2 Chronicles 7:7). If that is so, then The Third Temple could be built north of the Dome of the Rock, putting the Dome in the Court of the Gentiles. This

may well be the solution the Antichrist will come up with when he negotiates a peace between the Jews and the Arabs (Daniel 9:27).

To summarize, there is definitely going to be a third temple. It will most likely be erected at the beginning of the Tribulation in the form of a tent temple, like the Tabernacle of Moses. A more permanent structure will then be built around and above it. The Antichrist will desecrate this temple in the middle of the Tribulation.

The Third Temple will be destroyed at the Second Coming of Jesus. The great earthquake at that time will radically change the topography of Jerusalem and all the earth (Revelation 6:12-17). In Jerusalem it will result in the provision of a very large level area where the Millennial Temple will be constructed. This is the temple from which Jesus will reign over all the earth. It is described in detail in Ezekiel 40-46.