

# Some closing thoughts

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**Then he brought me back to the door of the temple; and there was water, flowing from under the threshold of the temple toward the east, for the front of the temple faced east; the water was flowing from under the right side of the temple, south of the altar.**

***Ezekiel 47:1***

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**S**OLOMON'S DEDICATORY PRAYER at the opening of the First Temple included some most inspiring thoughts:

*When Your people Israel are defeated before an enemy because they have sinned against You, and when they turn back to You and confess Your name, and pray and make supplication to You in this temple, then hear in heaven, and forgive the sin of Your people Israel, and bring them back to the land which You gave to their fathers. When the heavens are shut up and there is no rain because they have sinned against You, when they pray toward this place and confess Your name, and turn from their sin because You afflict them, then hear in heaven, and forgive the sin of Your servants, Your people Israel, that You may teach them the good way in which they should walk; and send rain on Your land which You have given to Your people as an inheritance. When there is famine in the land, pestilence or blight or mildew, locusts or grasshoppers; when their enemy besieges them in the land of their cities; whatever plague or whatever sickness there is; whatever prayer, whatever supplication is made by anyone, or by all Your people Israel, when each one knows the plague of his own heart, and spreads out his hands toward this temple: then hear in heaven Your dwelling place, and forgive, and act, and give to everyone*

*according to all his ways, whose heart You know... that they may fear You all the days that they live in the land which You gave to our fathers (1 Kin. 8:33-40).*

Could the people of Israel experience the same magnificent blessings today if they had a temple and if they turned in repentance towards God? Since a dwelling for God among men has been authorised by the promises to Abraham, and since those promises potentially span all ages in their fulfilment, God's permission does not need to be sought before construction can proceed. He has given it. A temple constructed according to the divine blueprint, served by a priesthood approved by the Law, would work wonders.

Of course, the political situation makes the idea virtually unthinkable. Maybe. However, temple blessings belong to all peoples. Solomon asked God to hear the prayers of every sincere person who sought His special blessings, in faith, at the designated sacred site. Jesus confirmed the temple's role as a house of worship for all nations. Who knows what beneficial role a temple might play in healing the breach between Jews and Christians? Though any suggestion of a rapprochement between Israelis and Muslims would call forth hoots of derision and charges of playing with the pixies, who can say what the God of the universe might not accomplish if those charged with keeping the temple alive rose to the challenge?

A standing temple will not solve all the world's problems. Israel and Judah of old went into national captivity in spite of a long-standing, active temple and priesthood. For the temple to bring genuine, lasting benefits, people must turn to God and Jesus Christ in all sincerity, not in outward form alone. A temple today would do no more good for a corrupt world than the Second Temple did for the Jews and Romans of the

first century. But it would do at least as much.

This book argues that even Christians would benefit from an active temple. Right now, it must be acknowledged, this thesis is pure theory. But what if a temple *were* to be built? Christians who are committed to full-blown shadow theory would be confronted with some serious conscience issues if they contemplated visiting it. After all, they would be obliged to take purity law seriously or they would not get to set a toe through the gates.

Salvation is administered through faith in Jesus Christ, not through temple ceremony. Possibly millions will enjoy bliss in the kingdom of God without ever having known anything of temple ritual. But to despise the only-ordained, local dwelling of God among men would surely be risky business. Wisdom suggests one won't do it.

But Christians do not need to wait, indeed, should not wait, until a temple rises up before they start observing other shadow ordinances. Mere observance of ordinances will do no good if not accompanied by faith in, and love for, God and Jesus Christ. Nevertheless, the humble can expect benefits from obedience. The Sabbath reminds its practitioners weekly of the power of Jesus Christ, their Creator, and gives them hope of the wonderful rest ahead. Holy days focus one's mind on the divine plan of salvation for all mankind. Discerning between clean and unclean helps one discern between holy and profane.

## A final thought

If the temple at Jerusalem stands as the sole focal point of all millennial ceremonial worship, won't it become too overcrowded to benefit anybody? If everybody on earth planned to make one visit in their lifetime for sacrificial purposes, that would translate into about 140,000 sacrifices being offered daily in a world populated by five billion people. Ce n'est pas possible.

That the entire population of Israel could squeeze into Jerusalem for Passover was considered a miracle in Jesus' day. One cannot discount the possibility of such an ongoing miracle throughout the Millennium. However, another possibility is worth considering. Some Scriptures suggest that in the new world order other sacrificial sites will exist. (The divinely-authorised conferring of ceremonial legitimacy on other sites in no

way does violence to the Law) Consider Isaiah 19:19-21:

*In that day there will be an altar to the LORD in the midst of the land of Egypt, and a pillar to the LORD at its border. And it will be for a sign and for a witness to the LORD of hosts in the land of Egypt; for they will cry to the LORD because of the oppressors, and He will send them a Savior and a Mighty One, and He will deliver them. Then the LORD will be known to Egypt, and the Egyptians will know the LORD in that day, and will make sacrifice and offering; yes, they will make a vow to the LORD and perform it.*

Some identify the altar and pillar in Egypt with the Great Pyramid (Howard Rand: *The Challenge of the Great Pyramid*, p. 4), but such identifications fail to do justice to the facts. A Jewish commentary on this passage sees the altar as "for sacrifices" in the future (Slotki 1983, p. 92). Likewise we have the testimony of Malachi 1:11:

*"For from the rising of the sun, even to its going down, My name shall be great among the Gentiles; in every place incense shall be offered to My name, and a pure offering; for My name shall be great among the nations," says the LORD of hosts.*

Most commentators since the early centuries of the established church have treated this verse figuratively as foretelling the Eucharist. Can one find any good reason not to take it literally? The reference to "in every place" seems to be contrasted with the warning of Deuteronomy 12:13 that Israel must, "Take heed... that you do not offer your burnt offerings in *every place* that you see". Might other locations be designated and consecrated for the same purposes, with Levites and priests presiding, when Jesus reigns?

I ask again; are we being wise to reject or despise those shadows in stone and in regulations that have the divine seal of approval? For those who take the Scriptures to heart, the jury's verdict has been given — shadow rites will thrive under Messiah Jesus. If shadow laws are good enough for Jesus, they should be good enough for us. If the lesser laws are still alive, how much more should Christians be concerned about the weightier matters — justice, love and faith