

Will there be a third temple built in Jerusalem?

by

Hershel Lee Harvell Jr.

(www.reformedontheweb.com)



Copyright statement:

(Anyone is at liberty to use material from this article with or without credit. I believe that the material set forth herein to be a true statement of Scripture teaching, and my desire is to further, not to restrict its use.)

The purpose of this short article is to examine the question: Will there be a third temple built in Jerusalem?

First, I want to make it very clear that I am not writing this because I haven't studied Dispensationalism and therefore don't know the system, like I ought, in order to make an informed conclusion concerning what the system of Dispensationalism teaches.

After my conversion in 1992, I came across a man by the name of Jack Van Impe. He is a modern day Bible prophecy scholar who has a television program which comes on weekly. Last I remember he had committed to memory over 10,000 verses of scripture. I was so impressed by this man that I wanted nothing more, but to imitate him. He could shoot through the Bible and give you all the so-called references that pertain to the Antichrist, the Tribulation, the Rapture, the Coming Judgments, and so forth. He was able to take the evening news and read headlines and pull scriptures from memory that supposedly had something to do with these Bible references. I was on fire for him, Dispensationalism, and Bible prophecy.

I began to buy books and prophecy study Bibles (from a dispensational genre, over 100 to be sure) and to watch four weekly prophecy programs a week. I carried index cards with me, every where I went, that had scriptures written on them and began to memorize these scriptures in the order that they fell throughout the Bible, that dealt with various prophecies and subjects concerning the end times. I carried the Scofield Reference Bible and memorized all the covenants, dispensations, footnotes, and knew how to tie scripture with modern day news headlines. To my credit I was predicting a terror attack before the 2001 terror attack ever occurred. People were astounded. They had never known anyone like me. Others thought I was crazy because I supposedly knew all this Bible and they couldn't figure out what would possess someone to spend so much time absorbing it.

As I studied and argued for Dispensationalism and the end time events, of which I thought surrounded scripture (this was because I thought the Bible consisted of nothing but eschatology), I was saved again by our Lord. I say that I was saved again because one day I came to the knowledge of the Reformed faith and it was as if I was born again, again. I began to study hermeneutics and realized that I had missed the Bible all together. All the ripping scripture from context, reading into verses, placing gaps where they don't belong, separating Israel and the Church, etc.... had given me a view of scripture that Paul nor our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ ever held.

I will state that Dispensationalism is one of the hardest errors from which to free one's self. It is a perversion that can only come about by someone who is not properly versed in the scriptures. To be sure I had read the Bible so many times I can't count. To be sure, I memorized five entire books of scripture, word for word. Nevertheless, my knowledge of scripture was spotty. It was a piece here and a piece there as it was applied to topics of which were foreign to the authors of Holy writ. I knew the

scriptures. I could quote them, but I knew them not in the context in which they were written. Dispensationalism reads or approaches scripture with its eschatology or study of last things. Any theology that begins with eschatology is not a system that is rooted in God's word. Dispensationalism is Israel centered or the focus of all that God does is on Israel and God's calling of the Jewish nation. However, Theology must begin with the doctrine of God or what would be properly called "Theology Proper." It must be "Christo-centric" or centered in Christ. This is because all scripture points to him. If we do not approach scripture, with the latter hermeneutic, then our theology will be distorted and thus Dispensationalism is a distorted version of Christianity.

Dispensationalism uses the faulty hermeneutical method of 'eisegesis' when it approaches scripture. The term 'eisegesis' literally means 'to read into.' In other words, Dispensationalism reads into scripture gaps and theories that are nowhere present in the text. The proper hermeneutical method of scripture is seen in the term 'exegesis.' This term means to 'draw out of' the text. We are to interpret scripture in the context of which it was written. In other words we are to approach the interpretation of scripture with the historical-grammatical-redemptive method of interpretation. This means that we are to understand it in the context of which it was written, historically. Since it was written to the nation of Israel and at other times certain congregations, then we are to understand it as it pertained to them in their historical and cultural setting. We are to understand it with the grammar it uses in which it was written and finally as it pertains to the whole scope of redemptive history. Remember, when interpreting scripture, be sure to always take Christ with you because it is Christ, of which the whole of scripture speaks.

I stated all this to plainly say that Dispensationalism forces gaps throughout scripture where no gap is present. In other words, Dispensationalism looks forward to a time when Israel will be dealt with in a final seven year period. This is forced into the prophetic scriptures given to us in the book of Daniel. If one would look at Daniel 9:25-27 they would see that it declares:

Dan 9:25 Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times.

Dan 9:26 And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined.

Dan 9:27 And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.

Dispensationalists declare this as the greatest prophecy in scripture. They state that it is the "Backbone of Bible Prophecy" and that to understand all prophecy, one must rightly understand this portion of scripture. In these scriptures Dispensationalists declare that 70 weeks or Shabua's were determined

upon Israel “to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy” Daniel 9:24.

Notice that I used the term 'Shabua' when speaking of the weeks of which Daniel mentioned in chapter 9 verse 24. This term they declare is a term that means a period of seven years each. That means that 70 weeks or 70 periods of seven years each were determined upon Israel. This would equal to 490 years. So from the time the decree went forth, until Messiah's coming, would have been 483 years or 69 weeks according to Daniel 9:25. A Jewish calendar contains months that are 30 days long and their years are 360 days long; so Dispensationalists state that 483 years or 173, 880 days passed, from the decree to rebuild Jerusalem, until Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey; then he was 'cut off or crucified a week later.

Dispensationalists argue that this arithmetic, which pointed to Christ's crucifixion, will only be right if one gets the decree to rebuild Jerusalem right. In other words, there were several decrees that were given to the Jews that allowed them to return to their homeland. But the decree in question would be the decree that Artaxerxes gave Nehemiah when he sent him back to the land of Palestine to rebuild Jerusalem. So in order for one to get this schema right they must use this decree. When this decree is used, then one can count the prophetic calendar days down and they will find exactly 173, 880 days from the decree to the day Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey. A week later the Messiah (Jesus) is cut off.

Now what about the seventieth week? This is where it gets hairy. Daniel 9:26 states that the Messiah would be cut off and then the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and sanctuary. Dispensationalists change from speaking about the Messiah, to speaking of the prince that shall come, who destroys the city and sanctuary. They identify this prince as the Romans; particularly Vespasian and his son Titus.

Again Dispensationalists recognize the Prince of Daniel 9:25 as being the Messiah because the verse uses the term “Messiah the Prince.” But in Daniel 9:26 Messiah is cut off and the second prince they identify as the Romans. But when they get to verse 27 they throw a 2000 year gap in between the 69th and 70th week. This is because that Daniel 9:27 states that “he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease.” The closes antecedent to the pronoun 'he' is the second prince of verse 26. But it gets even stickier because they do not identify this 'he' directly with the Romans of Jesus day, but with the revived Roman Empire of the last days or the tribulation period.

Dispensationalists argue that when the Romans destroyed the city and sanctuary, then it stopped God's

program of weeks with Israel. They state that one more week is determined upon Israel and this will be the seven year tribulation. This is the only place that an argument for a future seven year tribulation could be made and it is made by throwing a gap in between verses 26 and 27. The one who makes a covenant with Israel will be this Antichrist of the last days and when he makes this covenant with them, it will begin the seven year period. Dispensationalists leap back and forth between Revelation and here and tie the last week in with the 42 months or 3 ½ years mentioned in Revelation. They claim that the Antichrist breaks his covenant with Israel in the middle of the three and a half years and then sets himself in the temple, proclaiming himself to be God. They state that this is the abomination of desolation and also the event of which Paul mentions when Paul states that the man of sin will set himself in the temple of God stating that he is god and demand worship.

So in the dispensational schema of prophecy, Dispensationalists make a leap from the second prince in verse 26, to the Antichrist who shall appear in the last days, in verse 27. They make a leap from the Romans to a revived Roman Empire in the last days. They force 2000 years or more between the 69th and 70th week. So in order for the dispensational view to be true, there must of necessity be a rebuilt temple in Jerusalem; so that the Antichrist can sit in the temple showing himself to be god, after causing the sacrifice and offerings to cease, in the midst of a seven year peace treaty made with Israel. I quote Jack Van Impe's commentary on Daniel here:

“How could such an act be perpetuated in our day without the existence of a temple? Here's the answer. Israelites are talking about rebuilding the temple in our day. I encourage you to read your newspapers and weekly magazines with spiritual eyes in the days ahead because even now building materials are being gathered and the temple utensils created for the rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem. When the new temple is erected, all will go relatively well for a while, but then, midway into the tribulation hour , the Antichrist will sit proudly on that temple throne and claim to be the world's god (2 Thessalonians 2:4).”

I used to adhere to this whole gap theory nonsense. Here is my take and rebuttal of this interpretation:

Though I agree with their arithmetic concerning the 70 weeks and agree that 490 years were determined upon Israel before everlasting righteousness would be brought in and though I agree that the first Prince mentioned in Daniel 9:26 is the Messiah and the second prince is the Roman army that destroyed the city and sanctuary, nevertheless I disagree that the 'he' of verse 27 refers to the Antichrist at the end of this age. My reasons are as follows:

1) The first 69 weeks or 483 years ran consecutively or one right after another, then there is no good reason not to assume that the 70th week ran consecutively too.

2) There is nothing in the text that warrants a gap of two thousand years between the 69th and 70th week.

3) The immediate context of scripture speaks of the Romans destroying the city and sanctuary and therefore would not warrant the view that they or anyone from a Roman government caused the sacrifice and offerings to cease in verse 27.

4) To force a gap in a text destroys the unity and harmony of scripture.

There might be many more reasons why verse 27 is not speaking of the Romans, but I will let these four objections stand as an answer for why verse 27 is not speaking of the Revived Roman Empire or anyone out of it.

My view of verse 27 is as follows:

I believe the one to whom the scripture speaks, the one who will confirm the covenant with many for one week and the one of which causes the sacrifices and offerings to cease is non other than Jesus Christ himself. If we recognize that his ministry only lasted for 3 ½ years and after this he was cut off; so that the Old Testament sacrifices and offerings were no longer acceptable because of his sacrifice, then this interpretation makes perfect sense in the immediate context of what Daniel is recording for us. Dispensationalists will proclaim that this can't be because the sacrifices and offerings continued until Jerusalem was destroyed in A. D. 70. Yet, their interpretation that the sacrifices and offerings will cease after a future Antichrist stops them is foreign to the text. My interpretation fits because when Christ was cut off for his people, the Old Testament sacrifices ceased to be accepted by God as atonement for sin.

Also in Genesis we see that God's design for the world was one of multiple nations dwelling side by side throughout the world. It was not God's will that a one world government, separate from Christ's governing the nations, should exist. This is why God scattered the nations at the Tower of Babel. We see in Daniel 2 and 7 that four major world empires would exist until Messiah come. This is represented by the image of a statue in Daniel 2 and the four beast of Daniel 7. But when Messiah comes he would be this mountain or rock that would crush these four world empires and his kingdom would fill the whole earth and last forever.

[Dan 2:34 Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces.](#)

[Dan 2:35 Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshingfloors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth.](#)

Dan 2:44 And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.

Moving forward to the New Testament we see Dispensationalists taking Matthew 24, Mark 13, and Luke 17 and 21 and making them entirely futuristic. In other words they do not see much fulfillment in these chapters during the time of Roman occupation.

Let's examine Matthew 24.

Mat 24:1 And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple: and his disciples came to him for to shew him the buildings of the temple.

Mat 24:2 And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.

Mat 24:3 And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?

Why would the disciples even ask such a question as the one they put forth to Jesus in Matthew 24:3? We must remember that chapters and verses are good for referencing certain portions of scriptures, but they usually break the chain of thought that is running through scripture. In Matthew 23 Jesus pronounces judgment upon the city of Jerusalem. Matthew 23: 37-38 states:

“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.”

He had already told the Jews in Matthew 21:43

“Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.”

Dispensationalists never incorporate these scriptures into their system, yet they are just as much the word of God as the scriptures that they rip from context in order to prove their erroneous interpretations.

Jesus was in the temple and told the Pharisees that their house would be left to them desolate or forsaken Matthew 23:38. He immediately left the temple in Matthew 24 and on the way out the disciples showed Jesus the stones and magnificent architecture of the temple. Jesus' reply was that there was coming a time when one stone would not be left on another, till all was torn down. This refers to the prophecy given in Daniel 9:26. The Romans came and destroyed this temple in A. D. 70. So when

the disciples got Christ alone, up on the Mount of Olives, they asked him when shall these things occur, what shall be the sign of thy coming and the end of the age?

Now Dispensationalists will proclaim that the disciples were asking about the signs that would point to the end of the world? The word world is the word 'aenon' in Greek and means 'age.' So Dispensationalist state that the disciples were asking about the signs that point to the end of this age. Therefore they throw all these signs towards the end of this Christian age, but this is not accurate. These were not signs that pointed to the end of the Christian age, but pointed to the end of the Jewish age. Let me prove this:

The disciples would not have been trying to grasp the end of a Christian age, but the end of the Jewish age; therefore these signs are not second coming signs per se. The disciples did not even recognize that Christ would be crucified and be resurrected, much less recognize that he was coming again. Jesus told them time and again that he would be crucified and rise from the dead, but this saying was hidden from their eyes. Therefore when they asked about when these things shall be, what shall be the sign of thy coming and the end of the age, they were asking about the destruction of that temple. To a first century Jew, the destruction of the temple would have been the end of the world or age. They could not fathom such a concept.

So when Jesus began to give the signs in Matthew 24, he was giving the signs that pointed to the end of the Jewish age. He pronounced judgment on Jerusalem and the temple and was declaring the end of the Jewish age. There exists no Judaism today outside the Church. I know this might shock some folks to hear this statement, but I will say it again. Judaism does not exist today outside the Church. Jews meet in Synagogues today and could more rightly be called 'Talmudism.' There is no Judaism, among natural Jews, without a temple. A temple is a requisite for Judaism. It's something that must absolutely exist for Judaism to even be. This is because Judaism was centered in the rituals and sacrifices that went on within the temple. What exist today, among Jews, is a mixture of Talmudism, Baylonian religions, and occultic concepts. They are synagogues of Satan. This is why Christ proclaimed in Revelation:

[Rev 2:9 I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, \(but thou art rich\) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan.](#)

[Rev 3:9 Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee.](#)

Remember Paul declared that they are not all Israel, which are of Israel: Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children Romans 9:6-7 and again; For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God Romans 2:28-29. Therefore the Church consists of true Israel.

Dispensationalists proclaim that somewhere in the future, natural Israel, will build a temple, after an Antichrist figure comes to power. They proclaim that this Antichrist will make a covenant with Israel for a week and allow them to rebuild the temple. These modern day Israelites will go back to sacrifices and offerings and in the middle of the week or 7 years the Antichrist will cause these sacrifices to cease and will proclaim to be god and cause the world to worship him. Dispensationalist proclaim that after Christ comes back and destroys the Antichrist, then Christ will set up a millennial reign and allow a fourth temple to be built that will again have sacrifices and offerings being performed every day in remembrance of the sacrifice Christ gave for his Church.

My response:

[Heb 10:1 For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect.](#)

The temple will never again be rebuilt. The Bible no where teaches that God will move backwards towards types and shadows. Since revelation is progressive, then the shadows and types pointed forward to something greater. The greater has come and therefore types and shadows are no more needed.

What about 2 Thessalonians 2:4? Will the Antichrist need a temple to sit in if he is going to proclaim himself god? Let's look at the scripture:

[2Th 2:3 Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition;](#)

[2Th 2:4 Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.](#)

Notice that a great falling away or apostasy must occur before this man of sin is revealed. Is this a falling away from Old Testament Judaism? Or is it a falling away from the Christian faith?

I would declare that it is a falling away from the Christian faith and that the temple in which this individual sits is the Church of Christ. The word that is used in the verse for 'temple' is the same word Paul uses throughout his epistles for the body of the believer and the body of Christ. Therefore the man of sin will sit in the Church and proclaim himself to be god.

So I declare in my closing statement that nowhere throughout scripture does the Bible teach the building of a third or fourth temple.