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# LAST DAYS PROPHECY SEMINAR

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## LESSON SEVEN: “Will God’s Temple be Rebuilt in Jerusalem?”

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When we begin to talk about the fulfillment of Last Days’ prophecy, there is a question that arises about whether or not the Scriptures require that an actual temple be built on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem. The argument for a rebuilt temple is based on Paul’s discourse concerning the Man of Sin found in II Thessalonians 2:3,4.

The flip side of this argument is based on the premise that since the Apostle Paul was a student of the Law and the Prophets, he was simply teaching what he knew about the Man of Sin from the words of the Prophet Daniel. So, the question becomes: Did Daniel prophesy that a physical temple would be standing on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem when the Man of Sin is on the world stage?

We will examine the argument that the Apostle Paul was simply making a reference to an exact world-renowned location—as Jesus did in Matthew 24:15—as opposed to implementing a new requirement to be watched for in the Last Days.



- The “Temple Mount” is located on Mount Moriah in Jerusalem, Israel.
- The Temple Mount is under the control of Arabs and Muslims (Romans 11:25).
- It is currently home to the Al Aqsa Mosque (720 AD) and the Dome of the Rock (691 AD).
- The Jews pray at the Western Wailing Wall which is part of the remains of the temple retaining wall built by Herod the Great in 20 BC.
- The Jews took military control of the Temple Mount in the 6 day war of 1967; however, they immediately returned control of the Temple Mount to the Muslims as a sign of good will toward the Arab Community to forestall violent Arab reaction.

### **1. What does II Thessalonians 2:3,4 say?**

#### **A. II Thessalonians 2:3,4**

- [3] *“Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition,*
- [4] *who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.”*

#### **B. The church believes that the Apostle Paul was making a reference to an exact world-renowned location as opposed to prophesying an irrefutable landmark reference.**

- 1) The church always bases its doctrine on the premise of 2 or 3 witnesses supporting the same conclusion.
- 2) In other words, we do not adopt a doctrine based on one scripture. Any scripture must be rightly divided with other scriptures regarding the subject.
- 3) For example: In I Corinthians 14:34, Paul states that women should be silent and not permitted to speak in the church. This scripture makes absolute declarations that some people to this day use to say that women cannot minister in a church service.

- 4) The church, however, does not adhere to the doctrine that women cannot speak in church because 1) we believe that Paul clarified his statement in the following verse (women should question their husbands at home), and 2) other relevant scriptures in the Old and New Testament show that God uses women to speak His Word to His people.
  - 5) The conclusion is that we used other scriptures to rightly divide and understand an absolute declaration that Paul made in I Corinthians 14:34. And, we must acknowledge that some people say that we have violated what Paul said with our “rightly divided” understanding.
- C. The church does not intend to violate what the Apostle Paul said. We simply want to use the same mandate to “rightly divide” the scripture in II Thessalonians and see if other relevant scriptures support this statement.**
- 1) The church believes that the Old Testament does not set forth a requirement that an actual temple must be built on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem.
- D. If we state that a temple must be rebuilt, perhaps we will discount other relevant events that are taking place because we don’t see an actual temple sitting in Jerusalem.**

**2. The Apostle Paul was a student of the Law and the Prophets.**

- A. It would make perfect sense to say that Paul was simply relating his knowledge of Bible prophecy to the Thessalonians.**
- 1) Paul was a student of the Law.
    - a. Acts 22:3, [Paul speaking], *“I am indeed a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, **taught according to the strictness of our fathers’ law**, and was zealous toward God as you all are today.”*
    - b. Gamaliel was a highly-respected teacher of the law. Acts 5:34a, *“Then one in the council stood up, **a Pharisee named Gamaliel, a teacher of the law held in respect by all the people...**”*
  - 2) Since Paul was most likely relating what he had studied from the Prophets, it is logical to conclude that the book of Daniel would require that a temple be rebuilt as well.
  - 3) There is no New Testament record that Jesus taught that a temple would be reconstructed on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem.
- B. If the rebuilding of the temple was an irrefutable landmark for all to watch for, why did Jesus not make mention of it when He taught about this subject?**
- 1) Jesus addresses this issue in Matthew 24:15,16  
[15] *“Therefore when you see the ‘abomination of desolation,’ spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place” (whoever reads, let him understand),*  
[16] *“then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.”*
    - a. Jesus instructs us to watch for the abomination of desolation to stand in the holy place.
    - b. Notice that He does not set forth a temple requirement here.
    - c. Jesus was defining a particular event to watch for in a particular location (the abomination of desolation).
    - d. While parts of this scripture were fulfilled when the Roman General Titus destroyed Jerusalem and the Temple in 70 AD, the prophecy itself was not completely fulfilled as indicated in vs. 21 when Jesus says that there will be great tribulation such as has never been (an obvious Last Days prophecy that is unfulfilled as of yet).
    - e. Because of His ability to see and know the future, Jesus knew that the Temple would be destroyed. Perhaps that’s why He didn’t refer to it being there.

- f. The word *place* used in this passage simply means a *spot, or location*.
- 2) Here's Mark's version of the same teaching found in Mark 13:14, "So when you see the 'abomination of desolation,' spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing where it ought not" (let the reader understand), "then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains."
- a. In Mark's rendering of Jesus' words, he does not make a point of identifying a temple as being rebuilt.
- b. Mark's rendering simply reinforces that Jesus was referring to a location— not a building.
- 3) Some have made the argument that Jesus' reference to the Man of Sin standing in "the holy place" could only be speaking about the Holy of Holies found in God's Temple.
- a. This is of course an assumption. Jesus does not specify that He was referring to the Holy of Holies in the Temple.
- b. Ezekiel 43:12, "*This is the law of the temple: **The whole area surrounding the mountaintop is most holy.** Behold, this is the law of the temple.*"
- c. According to God, the whole top of the mountain is "most holy." Jesus' reference would make perfect sense since God considers the whole mountain top to be a holy place.
- 4) Notice that Jesus was addressing the issue of the abomination of desolation.
- a. Jesus qualifies this statement by saying, "*spoken of by Daniel the prophet.*"
- b. The church believes that Jesus gives us the right to investigate what the Prophet Daniel prophesied regarding this matter.
- c. In other words, we have to revert back to Daniel's prophecies to properly identify what to look for.
- 5) What does the term "abomination of desolation" mean?
- A. What is the literal meaning of the words?
- 1) Abomination: *disgusting, an abhorrence, especially idolatry, an idol.*
- 2) Desolation: *to stun, devastate, make amazed.*
- B. So the term literally means *an abhorrence—especially idolatry—that stuns or devastates.*

3. **So, the next question is: What did the Prophet Daniel say about the abomination of desolation?**

**A. There are 4 major passages in Daniel that address the abomination of desolation.**

**B. Daniel 8:11-14**

1) Daniel 8:11-14

[11] *"He even exalted himself as the Prince of the host; and by him the daily sacrifices were taken away, and the place of His sanctuary was cast down.*

[12] *Because of transgression, an army was given over to the horn to oppose the daily sacrifices; and he cast truth down to the ground. He did all this and prospered.*

[13] *Then I heard a holy one speaking; and another holy one said to the certain one who was speaking, "How long will the vision be, concerning the daily sacrifices and **the transgression of desolation**, and the giving of both the sanctuary and the host to be trampled underfoot?"*

[14] *And he said to me, "For two thousand three hundred days; then the sanctuary shall be cleansed."*

2) This prophecy was historically fulfilled when Antiochus Epiphanes ruled over Jerusalem from 175 BC until his death in 164 BC.

a. Antiochus (IV) Epiphanes was a Seleucid king who reigned over the Syrian division of the Greek Empire from 175 to 164 BC.

- b. In 171 BC, Antiochus appointed Menelaus as the High Priest over the Temple in Jerusalem.
    1. For the first time since the second Temple had been built, the title of High Priest was held by someone who was not of the tribe of Levi nor had he ever been a priest.
    2. Menelaus bribed Antiochus into appointing him High Priest because he had plans to forcefully Hellenize the Jewish people.
    3. It was Menelaus who would introduce a statue of Zeus and have it placed in the Temple.
  - c. Antiochus attacked the Temple in Jerusalem in 167 BC. In the month of Kislev (November/December) 167 BC, the Jewish Temple was immediately dedicated to the god Zeus. On the 25<sup>th</sup> day of Kislev sacrificial offerings of pigs began with their blood being sprinkled on the Holy of Holies.
- 3) There are 2 key statements to be evaluated in this prophecy:
- a. The time frame: 2,300 days.
  - b. The call for the sanctuary to be “cleansed.”
- 4) The time frame: If you divide 2,300 days by the number of days in a Jewish year, 354, you get 6½ years (this is of course estimating the length of a year when this prophecy was written in 551 BC).
- a. A time frame of approximately 6½ years is given. Notice that this is completely different from the 1,290 days prophesied in Daniel 12:11 and the 1,335 days prophesied in Daniel 12:12.
- 5) The “cleansing” of the Temple.
- a. The time from when Menelaus, the Antiochus-appointed High Priest, defiled the Temple in 171 BC, until it was cleansed in 165 BC, is approximately 7 years.
  - b. In 165 BC, the Temple was liberated and rededicated (cleansed) by Judas Maccabe.
  - c. This is the 2,300 days that Daniel prophesied about.
  - d. This act of rededicating the Temple is the basis for the festival Hanukkah which is observed by the Jewish people today. The Bible refers to it as the Feast of Dedication.
  - e. Jesus even observed the festival in John 10:22,23, *“Now it was the Feast of Dedication in Jerusalem, and it was winter. [23] And Jesus walked in the temple, in Solomon’s porch.”*
- 6) The church believes that this prophecy has been historically fulfilled.

### C. Daniel 11:29-31

(NOTE: This is a continuation of the same story found in Daniel 8:11-14 when Antiochus Epiphanes attacked both Jerusalem and God’s Temple.)

- 1) Daniel 11:29-31
  - [29] *“At the appointed time he shall return and go toward the south; but it shall not be like the former or the latter.*
  - [30] *“For ships from Cyprus shall come against him; therefore he shall be grieved, and return in rage against the holy covenant, and do damage. So he shall return and show regard for those who forsake the holy covenant.*
  - [31] *“And forces shall be mustered by him, and they shall defile the sanctuary fortress; then they shall take away the daily sacrifices, and place there **the abomination of desolation.**”*
- 2) Some have said the reference in vs. 31 to “sanctuary fortress” is a prophetic requirement for the Temple to be rebuilt in the Last Days.
  - a. This theory will be dispelled after studying the historical fulfillment of this prophecy.
- 3) This prophecy was written in 536 BC. It was fulfilled when Antiochus Epiphanes attacked Jerusalem in 167 BC and offered swine’s flesh on the altar of God in the

Temple of God.

- 4) What did he do?
  - a. In 168 BC, Antiochus led an attack on Egypt and also sent a fleet of ships to capture Cyprus; however, he was stopped by the Romans.
    1. This is a direct fulfillment of vs. 30, *“For ships from Cyprus shall come against him...”*
  - b. In 167 BC, Antiochus, enraged because of his defeat at the hands of the Romans, attacked Jerusalem with a vengeance.
    1. Again, this is a direct fulfillment of vs. 30, *“...and return in rage against the holy covenant...”*
  - c. 2 Maccabees 5:11-14, *“When these happenings were reported to the king [Antiochus Epiphanes], he thought that Judea was in revolt. Raging like a wild animal, he set out from Egypt and took Jerusalem by storm. He ordered his soldiers to cut down without mercy those whom they met and to slay those who took refuge in their houses. There was a massacre of young and old, a killing of women and children, a slaughter of virgins and infants. In the space of three days, eighty thousand were lost, forty thousand meeting a violent death, and the same number being sold into slavery.”*
    1. Vs. 30 says that he will *“do damage.”*
- 5) How did Antiochus fulfill prophecy? He defiled the Temple of God and set up a pagan idol on the site.
  - a. *“In 168 BC Antiochus Epiphanes dared to occupy Jerusalem, enter the Holy of Holies, desecrate the sanctuary by offering unclean animals upon the altar of burnt offerings, pollute the whole building by sprinkling it with water with which flesh had been boiled, dedicated the Temple itself to Jupiter Olympius, and erected the statue of that deity and plundered the Temple treasures.”* (“Antiochus Epiphanes”, [www.http://latter-rain.com/Israel/antep.htm](http://latter-rain.com/Israel/antep.htm))
    1. This was a direct fulfillment of vs. 31, *“...they shall defile the sanctuary fortress and place there the abomination of desolation.”*
- 6) The church believes that this prophecy has been historically fulfilled.

#### D. Daniel 11:36

- 1) Daniel 11:36, *“Then the king shall do according to his own will: he shall exalt and magnify himself above every god, **shall speak blasphemies against the God of gods**, and shall prosper till the wrath has been accomplished; for what has been determined shall be done.”*
  - 2) Vs. 36 starts out with the word “then.” We’ve already discussed that some of verses prior to vs. 36 have been fulfilled historically.
    - a. Vs. 29-31 details the attack of Antiochus Epiphanies on Jerusalem.
    - b. Vs. 32-35 details events that took place after Antiochus including the time of the Dark Ages.
      1. Daniel 11:32-35
        - [32] *“Those who do wickedly against the covenant he shall corrupt with flattery; but the people who know their God shall be strong, and carry out great exploits.*
        - [33] *“And those of the people who understand shall instruct many; **yet for many days they shall fall by sword and flame**, by captivity and plundering.*
        - [34] *“Now when they fall, they shall be aided with a little help; but many shall join with them by intrigue.*
        - [35] *“And some of those of understanding shall fall, to refine them, purify them, and make them white, **until the time of the end**; because it is still for the appointed time.”*
- c. Note the reference to “many days” in vs. 33 and the reference “until the time

of the end” in vs. 35. These scriptures reference a span of time from approximately 150 years before Christ until the present day.

- d. The word “then” in vs. 36 denotes a succession of events. In other words, this is the next thing to happen.
- 3) Vs. 36 is a prophecy concerning the Last Days.
  - a. Again, we have the prophecy concerning the abomination of desolation when the Man of Sin blasphemes against God.
  - b. Notice the phrase, “...and shall prosper...” One of the main descriptions of the last 7 years regarding the Man of Sin is that he will use prosperity to deceive the people.
  - c. Last, notice the reference to “...till the wrath has been accomplished...” This is a reference to the wrath of God being poured out on mankind.
- 4) Notice that there is no temple requirement made in the vs. 36 Last Days’ prophecy.
  - a. What did Daniel tell us to look for?
  - b. A man who would blaspheme God and declare that he is as God.
- 5) The church believes that Daniel 11:36 is a Last Days’ prophecy that has yet to be fulfilled.

**E. Daniel 9:27**

- 1) Daniel 9:27, “Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week; but in the middle of the week he shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering. **And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate, even unto the consummation, which is determined, is poured out on the desolate.**”
- 2) This is a Last Days’ prophecy predicated by the requirement that the Man of Sin will confirm a “covenant with many for one week.”
  - a. There has been no historical fulfillment of this prophecy since it was written some 2,500 years ago.
  - b. The Church of God believes this occurs when the Man of Sin confirms a world-wide peace agreement which will initiate the last 7 years before the 7<sup>th</sup> Trump return of Jesus Christ.
- 3) The church believes that this prophecy is a Last Days’ prophecy that has yet to be fulfilled.

**F. The church does not believe that the prophecies set forth by the Prophet Daniel require that a temple be rebuilt in Jerusalem.**

- 1) Some say that the prophecies regarding the stopping of the daily sacrifices by implication demands that a temple be present.
  - a. In other words, Jews will not offer sacrifices unless there is a temple to sacrifice in.
  - b. This of course is a theory: The scripture does not mention that the daily sacrifices took place in a temple on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem.

**4. What is II Thessalonians 2:4 saying?**

**A. II Thessalonians 2:4, “Who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.”**

- 1) We have already established that the Apostle Paul was teaching what he knew about the Last Days from his knowledge of the prophecies of Daniel.
- 2) The church believes that the book of Daniel does not prophesy that a new temple will be erected in Jerusalem.
- 3) With this understanding in mind, the church believes that the Apostle Paul was making a reference to an explicit location on earth rather than making a new prophecy regarding the Last Days.

**B. To whom was the Apostle Paul writing to in this passage?**

- 1) II Thessalonians 1:1, "...To the church of the Thessalonians..."
- 2) Where was Thessalonica?
  - a. Thessalonica was the second largest city in Greece.
  - b. Paul had preached there on his second missionary journey.
- 3) In other words, the Apostle Paul was writing to foreigners.
- 4) The church believes that his use of the phrase "the temple of God" was designed to instruct them concerning a world-renowned location that has not changed over thousands of years.
  - a. Most educated people know that God's Temple is found in Jerusalem.
  - b. Remember, Paul wrote this letter some 2,000 years ago. He was telling them that they weren't living in the Last Days yet and that a number of prophecies had to be fulfilled first.
- 5) When Paul wrote the phrase "the temple of God," there was an actual Temple sitting on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem.
  - a. It would make perfect sense for him to refer to it—while identifying the location to foreigners—because it was the most recognizable symbol of the Temple Mount.
  - b. In other words, the people of Thessalonica would know exactly where he was telling them to watch for certain events to take place in the future.
  - c. And, Paul's description was so accurate that even today we know exactly where to watch for the Man of Sin to blaspheme Yahweh God.
- 6) It would also make sense for Jesus not to refer to the Temple in Matthew 24:15 because He could see through prophecy that the Temple would be destroyed; however, the Holy Place—or Temple Mount—would be there for generations.

**5. How does a temple built by man become God's?**

**A. If we accept the premise that a literal interpretation of II Thessalonians 2:4 must be applied, the next question becomes, "What makes a man-made temple today acceptable to God?"**

- 1) What structure could be erected today that would qualify for God to say: "That is My Temple?"
- 2) Would God permit His Temple to be erected by non-Christians on a site already occupied by the Muslim Dome of the Rock—a pagan temple?
  - a. Consider the account of Dagon and the Ark of the Covenant in I Samuel 5. The Philistines captured the Ark of the Covenant from Israel and placed it in the house of their god, Dagon. God would not permit the pagan god to stand upright in the ark's presence. In fact, God destroyed the idol by breaking off its head and hands.
  - b. II Corinthians 6:16, "***And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I will dwell in them and walk among them. I will be their God, and they shall be My people."***"
  - c. Furthermore, the tensions existing between the Israelis and the Palestinians concerning the Temple Mount in Jerusalem is volatile to say the least.
    1. In a September/October 2010 article entitled, "Temple Mount Repairs Leave Eyesores," author Hershel Shanks writes, "*Two unsightly scaffolds hang from the walls of the Temple Mount, one on the southern wall and a second on the eastern wall. The question is whether they will be there forever. Worse things have happened in Jerusalem. An old wooden ladder sits above the entrance to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. It has been there for more than 200 years and cannot be moved because of warring factions of priests and jurisdiction in the church.*"

2. Shanks goes on to write that the scaffolding was left on the walls because of repairs made to the walls. The Israelis did not trust the Palestinians to repair the walls, and the Palestinians did not trust the Israelis to tamper with the site. A compromise was reached allowing Jordanians to undertake the task and they left the scaffolds hanging upon their departure. Neither Israel nor the Palestinians will allow either group to remove the scaffolding.
3. Although nothing is impossible with God, the possibility of any group of people trying to erect a new temple on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem—in view of the existing hostilities between Israel and the Palestinians—would be nonexistent.

**B. The New Testament tells us that God does not dwell in a man-made temple.**

- 1) We recognize that this dispensational change took place when the Law Dispensation was replaced by the Grace Dispensation through Jesus Christ.
  - a. In the Law Dispensation, God DID choose to dwell in man-made temples as demonstrated in the Wilderness Tabernacle and the Temple of Solomon.
- 2) In the Grace Dispensation, however, God no longer dwells in temples made by man.
  - a. Acts 7:48, “However, the ***Most High does not dwell in temples made with hands***, as the prophet says.”
  - b. Acts 17:24, “God, who made the world and everything in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, ***does not dwell in temples made with hands.***”
- 3) Are we saying that the Apostle Paul says God will again inhabit a man-made temple? If not, how can we call it the “temple of God”?
  - a. Again, this is why the church believes Paul was referring to a location— not a building.
  - b. Remember Jesus said “place” which means *a spot or location*—He did not specify a structure.

**C. In the Grace Dispensation, Jesus Christ is the Temple wherein our sins are forgiven.**

- 1) Hebrews 9:11, “But Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come, with the ***greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands***, that is, not of this creation.”
  - a. John 2:19-21

[19] “Jesus answered and said to them, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.”

[20] Then the Jews said, “It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days?”

[21] ***But He was speaking of the temple of His body.***”
  - b. Jesus was referring to a dispensational change: A man-made temple was no longer required to obtain forgiveness for sins.
  - c. Jesus became the Temple from which we receive forgiveness of sins.
  - d. In other words, one does not have to be in a particular location to receive forgiveness of sins, they only have to pray to Jesus for forgiveness.

**D. Today, the Temple of God is spiritual.**

- 1) I Corinthians 3:16,17

[16] ***Do you not know that you are the temple of God*** and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?

[17] If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy Him. For the temple of God is holy, which temple you are.”
- 2) Ephesians 2:19-22

[19] “Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God,

[20] having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus

*Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone,*

[21] **In whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple of the Lord,**

[22] **in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.**

- 3) I Peter 2:5, **“You also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.”**

**E. Finally, in an attempt to address all relevant scriptures regarding this matter, we must look at Revelation 13:6, **“Then he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name, His tabernacle, and those who dwell in heaven.”****

- 1) Some have used this scripture to say that there must be a temple on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem for the Man of Sin to blaspheme.
- 2) The Man of Sin is blaspheming God in heaven: First His name, second His dwelling place, and third, those who are dwelling in heaven with Him.
- 3) The Scriptures are clear that God inhabits His Temple in heaven.
  - a. Revelation 11:19, **“Then the temple of God was opened in heaven...”**
- 4) Consider the New International Version translation of Revelation 13:6, **“He opened his mouth to blaspheme God, and to slander his name and his dwelling place and those who live in heaven.”**
- 5) When the Man of Sin commits the “abomination of desolation” in the middle of the last 7 years, He blasphemes everything about God: His name, His Temple (His dwelling place in heaven), and last, those who are dwelling in heaven with Him.
- 6) The church does not believe that this scripture sets forth a requirement for a temple to be rebuilt on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem prior to the return of Christ.

## **6. Conclusion**

The church does not believe that either Jesus Christ nor Daniel the Prophet taught that God requires His Temple be rebuilt on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem before the return of Christ. The church believes that the Apostle Paul’s reference to the “temple of God” in II Thessalonians 2:4 was to identify a world-renowned location to the foreigners he was teaching concerning where to watch for the abomination of desolation that would take place in the Last Days.

The Last Days are promised to be full of deception and trickery. The church would not want to miss what is happening in prophecy because we are waiting for the physical rebuilding of a temple in Jerusalem. Here is our consolation: If a temple is rebuilt, so be it. However, if we do not see a temple, we should not convince ourselves that we still have time or that we can dismiss relevant prophetic events that may be happening all around us.