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ARIEL
MINISTRIES

The Millennial Temple: Literal or Allegorical?



A closer look
at Isaiah 11

Jewish Culture 101:
The Tefillin

Testimony
Jacques Gabizon

ARIEL MAGAZINE



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Purpose Statement

Ariel Ministries exists in order to evangelize Jewish people and to disciple Jewish and Gentile believers through intensive Bible teaching from a Jewish perspective.

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The Sacrificial Lamb

Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male a year old.

You may take it from the sheep or from the goats, – Exodus 12:5

I've always loved springtime for its cooler weather and beautiful blooms. This is also the time of year where we celebrate several Jewish feasts, beginning with Passover – the feast of salvation.

It's no coincidence that Messiah Yeshua was sacrificed on Passover. He is the "lamb without blemish," as described in the book of Exodus, while in several New Testament scriptures He is portrayed as the final Passover lamb.

Today, the Messiah is represented as our personal "passover" – our salvation from God's wrath. *Your boasting is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? Cleanse out the old leaven that you may be a new lump, as you really are unleavened. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed. - Corinthians 5:6-7.*

Passover was ultimately fulfilled by the death of Yeshua on the cross. While the Jews marked their doorposts with the blood of the lamb to protect their firstborn, today believers mark their bodies with the blood of the sacrificial lamb, to protect them from everlasting death.

Many will attend church on Easter Sunday with their friends and family, but how many will celebrate or understand the true meaning of Passover? It's easy to get lost in the paganism of some holidays, without realizing a Jewish connection to Yeshua. I want to encourage you to continue seeking the Jewish roots of your Christian faith, and if you don't know Messiah Yeshua, I urge you to find Him in the Old Testament scriptures – He is in there!



May you go forward with Messiah Yeshua – remembering that He is the true sacrificial lamb.

Blessings this spring season,

Emily Glisson

Emily Glisson



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Chris & Lisa Savage represent Ariel Ministries in Australia. Based in Victoria, we currently teach the Scriptures from the Jewish perspective to weekly classes. Bi-monthly one day seminars start in July with national teaching engagements commencing in the second half of 2015.



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Jacques and Sharon Gabizon represent Ariel Ministries in Canada. Their projects include door-to-door evangelism of Jewish homes in Montreal and translating Ariel's manuscripts into French. Ariel Canada established a messianic congregation in Montreal called Beth Ariel.



Ariel India Bakul N. Christian

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Bakul Christian represents Ariel Ministries in India and resides with his wife and daughter in Ahmedabad. After a chance meeting with a former New Zealand representative, Bakul became interested in the Jewish perspective of God's Word. Today, Bakul daily seeks the Lord's direction concerning his outreach ministry in India.



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Sasha and Lilian G. represent Ariel Ministries in Israel. The husband and wife team have been representing Ariel Ministries in Israel since October 2009. They are responsible for coordinating the translating the Come & See Discipleship Program into Hebrew and Russian.



Ariel China

For safety issues, we must protect the identity of this branch. Please keep them in your prayers.



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Thanks to Manfred Künstler and his wife, Hanna, Ariel Ministries has had a presence in Germany, Austria, and Switzerland since 1985. In 2002, the work was passed on to Georg Hagedorn who, eight years later, turned it into a full branch. Today, this branch is led by a team of brothers and sisters.



Ariel Hungary Ivan & Rita Nagy

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Ivan and Rita Nagy represent Ariel Ministries in Hungary. The husband and wife team have developed a Come & See website in Hungarian. They also host several home Bible study groups, teaching from Ariel's materials. Their goal is to make teachings available to Jewish people, believers, and to the Hungarian people.



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The Ariel New Zealand board of Johan van Vuuren, Jason Santiago, and John Cavanagh was appointed in July this year and is working at establishing the New Zealand branch in Auckland as well as organising Arnold's tour through New Zealand in 2015.

ARIEL REPRESENTATIVES



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Michael and Hannah Gabizon are missionaries representing Ariel Ministries in Canada. The young couple has actively been involved in teaching and discipling people through God's Word. Their goal is to identify other young people within their sphere of influence who may be interested in becoming involved with Ariel.



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Chris and Tina Eisbrenner are missionaries representing Ariel Ministries in Upstate NY and the New England area. Chris serves as academic dean and professor at Ariel's School of Messianic Jewish Studies (ASMJS), and Tina is office manager of ASMJS and helps at Camp Shoshanah in the summers. Chris is also a field representative for Ariel Ministries, ministering in churches across the US, teaching the Bible from a Jewish historical and cultural perspective.



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John Metzger is a missionary who represents Ariel Ministries in Pennsylvania. He is a teacher and speaker who actively travels throughout the central and eastern part of the U.S., speaking at various churches and conferences. John is also the author of *Discovering the Mystery of the Unity of God* published by Ariel Ministries.



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Gary and his wife Missy are the managers and camp facilitators of the Shoshanah campus in upstate New York. Every summer they help host Ariel's Program of Messianic Jewish Studies. For more information about this program, please visit www.ariel.org.





For the Glory of the Lord Jacques Gabizon

I was born in Casablanca, Morocco. My grandfather was a rabbi. At home, we always kept the traditions and as much of the Mosaic Law as possible. Every Friday evening and Saturday morning, we went to synagogue, and I attended Hebrew school.

While my family name, Gabizon, sounds French, Gab-Zonit really is Hebrew—Gab-Zon—and means “keeper of food.” Tradition in our family tells us that in the mid-1400s, my family’s task was to feed the poor in Spain. It was after the Inquisition, when the state church forced the Jews to convert to Christianity or face expulsion or death, that my family moved to North Africa.



Gab-Zon



Jacques Gabizon is the director of Ariel Ministries Canada. He leads a messianic congregation in Montreal called Beth Ariel. He and his wife Sharon have four children and two grandchildren. Jacques testimony was first published in Ariel Ministries’ book, *What We Have Seen and Heard – Twenty-Three Jews Speak about their Faith in Messiah*.



For a long time, and before the recent wars in Israel (those of 1967 and 1973), there was a strong Jewish population in Casablanca. There were some 200,000 Jews then; now there are less than 5,000. In history, Jews living in Muslim countries were treated fairly well compared with those living in Europe, but there often were waves of anti-Semitism.

My fondest memories of Casablanca consist of the Sabbaths in my grandfather's synagogue. I would sit with him on the *Bimah* and make sure that my friends saw me up there. They would look up to me, and that helped me during the week at school to receive free candies and preferred treatment.

None of my grandfather's sons became rabbis, and when I asked my dad why this was so, he gave me an unusual answer. He told me that my grandfather once admonished him only to rely on what is written in the Bible and not on rabbinical writings. Furthermore, my father had once asked him about Jesus and why He was not accepted within Judaism. My grandfather answered that he never understood why they had killed Him.

The only other information I have about my grandfather comes from a very unusual phone call that I received a couple of years ago. The display told me that the person called from Texas. As soon as I heard his voice, I could feel that he was very emotional. He asked me if I was Jacques Isaac Gabizon to which I answered, "Yes." He told me that he had seen my name in the Ariel newsletter and that he wanted to know if I was related to Rabbi Abraham Gabizon. When I answered that he was my grandfather, there was a long moment of silence, and I asked him if he was still there. This person further inquired if I could tell him the name of the synagogue my grandfather led. Obviously, he did not believe me. So I said that it was the Synagogue Benarosh on Lusitania Street in Casablanca. Again, there was a long moment of

silence, and I could feel the strong emotions in his voice when he told me that he had studied under my grandfather who also performed his Bar Mitzvah and that now he was a retired pastor. He asked me if my grandfather ever became a believer, and I told him that I did not know, but I gave him the information I just presented to you, the reader. The man was really glad to hear all of that. The Lord works in wonderful ways!

From Casablanca to Montreal

Soon after the Six-Day-War in Israel, in 1967, life for a Jew in a Muslim country became difficult. While the king protected the Jews in Morocco, there still were many acts of anti-Semitism. I remember the day the war began. The Moroccan radio actually reversed the news. They reported that Israel was losing the war, that planes were shot down, and that the Arab armies were advancing inside the land of Israel—all of this until my grandmother came rushing in and told us to switch to a European radio station. As we learned later, the king had ordered that the news be reversed in order to avoid riots against the Jews—an act which saved many lives. Nevertheless, a year later, my family moved to Montreal.

We had a choice between Israel, France, and Quebec, and I am very grateful that I ended up in Montreal because this is where I met the Lord, and this is where I met my wife as well.

When I arrived, I was in for some culture shock. My parents decided it would be best for me to enter English school, since the only French schools were Catholic and Jews were not allowed in (even though this law was removed in the early 1960s, an anti-Jewish atmosphere still remained). So at the age of 12, one day after arriving in Montreal, I started my new school, without knowing a word of English. It took me three



testimony

months before I was even able to hold any kind of a decent conversation. By the fourth month, I could at least follow the classes, but it did not come easy, and to this day, I have kept my accent.

My first encounter with Jesus was when we still lived in Casablanca. On Saturdays, after synagogue, we would go to the movies. Usually, the students of the whole school gathered there. It was very loud, very lively, and the movies that were shown were mainly about good and bad cowboys or about Hercules and Samson and other heroes. The particularity of these movies was that the good man always won at the end, and you felt very good about them.

However, one Saturday, when I was about eight years old, there was a new movie in town. It was about Jesus. What struck me and, judging from the mood at the end of the movie, most of the other kids was that the good man did not win. We were left unsatisfied! I am sure they showed the resurrection and ascension, but this is not what I wanted. I wanted the man to come back with a sword or with a gun and get back at the bad guys. But this is not the way this movie ended. I could not quite understand how the producers could portray a hero who died.

On the way home, I asked my sister why they killed Jesus. I could not get an answer because she cried all the way to our house.

The Search Begins

By the time I was in college, I began taking a deep interest in religion, especially in prophecies. At the time, prophecies were the “in” thing. Some of my friends, also Jewish and mostly from Morocco, were already absorbed with the prophecies of Nostradamus; others spent their time with astrological charts. Somehow I refused to even consider these esoteric sciences before looking at

my own religion first. I knew of some Jewish prophets. I remembered the names of Daniel, Ezekiel, Isaiah, and I knew that they had written in the *Tanach*, but I did not know what they wrote. A burning desire to find out started to develop.

I went to my father and asked him if he knew anything about the prophets. He did not, but he handed me some books that belonged to my grandfather. I read many pages, but, unfortunately, they were only prayer books.

At around the same time, some evangelists came to my college and set up a book table. I approached them and picked up a book. On the back cover, it said: “What the Old Testament Hebrew Prophets prophesy about our time.” That was the very question I had asked! I remember this moment vividly. I was filled with awe and some kind of healthy fear because I had this conviction that Someone was watching. I am, by nature, very skeptical, but I knew that there was something supernatural going on. I felt disarmed, powerless, and exposed. Nevertheless, I wanted to buy the book, but I was not sure I had enough money. I put my hand in my pocket and found the exact amount needed to buy this book plus an additional ten cents for a return bus fare. This book was *The Late Great Planet Earth* by Hal Lindsey.

Like Jeremiah, I ate that book. What I read was new to me, and somehow, I knew it was the truth. It spoke about Daniel’s prophecies on the end times and about the Second Coming of the Messiah. “Second” the writer said, so He must have come before! That disturbed me. Did I miss something?

I read about the war of Gog and Magog in Ezekiel 38-39. I was dumbfounded about the people of Rosh who, through history, went to establish themselves where Russia is now, Rosh being the root of the name of this country. I marveled about



Mesheck and Tubal and their relation to Moscow and Tobolsk. I did not know that the Word was so specific! I also learned that prophecies are the one thing the Bible has which is not found in other holy books. As a matter of fact, God even tells us to challenge the other nations with prophecies when, speaking of other religions, He said to the Jewish nation in Isaiah 41:22, *Let them bring forth and declare to us what is going to take place; As for the former events, declare what they were, That we may consider them and know their outcome. Or announce to us what is coming.*

The other religions do not have the prophecies we find in the Bible, and they have nothing to show for. Something was building up inside of me . . . what were these prophecies that had already been fulfilled? And how could the author of the book, a non-Jew, know so much about my religion? Have we failed to spot something in our own Scriptures?

I remember going to my father and asking him, “How come they know so much more than we do, and yet this is our book?” He, too, was surprised. In fact, it made us jealous! This is very biblical and something Paul spoke about in Romans 11:11. *I say then, Did they [the Jewish people] stumble that they might fall? God forbid: but by their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, to provoke them to jealousy.”*

Many today are under the impression that Jews know the Bible well, but this is not so! They know their history, but if they knew their Bible, they would come to believe in Jesus. He, Himself, said in John 5:46, *For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me; for he wrote about Me.*

But all of this was fine and very interesting, and I enjoyed reading more about it until the day I came across the other part of prophecies, the messianic prophecies. They are the ones, which again and again speak about Yeshua being the Jewish

Messiah. That greatly disturbed me because if the end time prophecies were true (which, at this point, I believed they were), then the messianic prophecies should also be true and Jesus must be the Messiah.

At around the same time, I went to visit a friend who was sick at home. While there, I met a Baptist minister, Jim Browning, and knowing he was a pastor, I went to sit next to him and asked him this question: “Who is Jesus?” That is the million-dollar question for an evangelist. Knowing I was Jewish, this pastor tried to show me Jesus in the Old Testament. He told me that Jesus was the Angel of the LORD who came to earth to die for our sins. The problem was that I had never heard of the Angel of the LORD or of God’s visible manifestation in the Hebrew Scriptures; so all I understood was that Jesus was an angel who came down to die for our sins. Despite the aversion I had, I was dissatisfied. Such a big deal for an angel, I thought. I was truly disappointed because I thought I was onto something much bigger. But the Spirit of God did not lead me to this point to let me go so easily.

I actually called the pastor the same evening, and he clarified who the Angel of the LORD really was. Now, though, things became even worse because what he said was that Jesus was God! I knew I was onto something big—but not that big! The struggle began. The Trinity has very often been a difficult doctrine for Jews.

Jehovah Jesus?

Then I came across a verse in the Hebrew Scriptures that truly touched me and made me understand that He is indeed God. This passage is in Isaiah 43:11, where Jehovah says, *I, even I, am Jehovah; and besides me there is no savior.* There are two possible conclusions to draw from this verse:



testimony

A. that Jesus is not the Savior and not the Messiah

B. that Jesus is not only the Messiah, but that He is Jehovah Himself

I was really put—or better thrown—against the wall. All of a sudden, I understood that He was not a man who became God, but rather God who, in His grace, became man.

Another passage that brought me to see that Jesus is the Messiah contains some of the most powerful verses of the Bible. It is the prophecy of Isaiah 53, which clearly points out that the Messiah had to die. I did not know the *Tanach* taught that He would come first to die for the sins of His people and of the world before establishing His Kingdom.

When I first read Isaiah 53, I really thought that my Bible had been falsified and that someone had put the New Testament into the Holy Scriptures, so clear is this passage. I went to show it to my parents and asked them if they knew about it. Like most Jews, they did not.

Psalm 22:16 explains the manner of the death of the Messiah. Even before crucifixion was invented as a method of execution, David wrote about Messiah: *For dogs have compassed me: A company of evil-doers have inclosed me; They pierced my hands and my feet.*

One more prophecy—and a very important one—is found in Zechariah 12:10 where we read that, when the Messiah comes back, the Jewish nation will recognize the One whom they have pierced. That answers the question of the



two comings of the Messiah. He came once to die, and a second time to set up His Kingdom. At that time, we, the Jews, will recognize the One we have pierced. Jesus must be the Messiah!

The moment I understood this earth-shaking truth, I became a believer. My meetings with Jim, the Baptist minister, lasted a couple of months. Not long after, I met another individual who had a great impact in my life ... my wife Sharon.

When I first met her, she was not a believer, and, in my zeal, one of the first things I told her is that if she did not believe in Jesus she will go to Hell. So, she went to tell her mother. Up to this day, her mother thinks I am crazy. However, a year and a half later, Sharon and I were married.

It was, as many have pointed out, a mixed marriage in more than one way. My wife is an Ashkenazi Jew, and I am a Sephardic Jew. Neither of us knew the difference until we met. Ashkenazi Jews are those who come from European countries, while Sephardic Jews come from Spanish and Arabic countries. These two groups lived far away from each other and, for the past 2,000 years, rarely ever crossed paths. Yet, our respective traditions concerning, for example, the Sabbath or the Jewish feasts, even our prayers, are very much the same. This shows that our customs had the same origin and could be traced back to the time of Jesus.

When I was first invited to my wife's family for the Jewish holidays, I immediately felt at home.

But when I married Sharon, she was not a believer. The Bible clearly teaches that a believer should not marry a non-believer. At the time, being young in the faith, I was unaware of the command.



However, God was very gracious with us in that He brought Sharon to a saving knowledge of Himself eight years after we got married.

When our respective families found out that she, too, was a believer, they panicked, especially for our children, and persecution started to pour in. They brought us to many rabbis and anti-missionaries. During this time, Sharon and I grew tremendously in our faith. The more we discussed and argued with these people, the more we believed in the Word of God. The more we were persecuted, the stronger our faith became. We were forced to study in order to answer the attacks. We were forced to pray very hard, and Jesus' promise to never leave us nor forsake us became very real. I had never felt His very presence so strongly.

One of the most remarkable encounters I had was with a prominent Moroccan rabbi of Montreal. We sat down in his office, and after I had told him about Isaiah 53, he told me that this passage does not at all refer to the Messiah and that the Messiah does not die in Judaism.

Strangely enough, just a couple of days prior to the meeting, I had read that the *Talmud* does indeed teach that the Messiah will die. I told the rabbi about it and even remembered the place. The teaching was from the tractate of Sanhedrin, 98b. The rabbi went to get his *Talmud*, read the passage, and looked somewhat surprised. So I asked him if it was at least "Jewishly" correct to say that the Messiah is to die for our sins, since at least one rabbi had seen it that way. He responded that this was only one interpretation and that we (referring to our Moroccan community) adhere mainly to the interpretations of Maimonides and Rashi.¹ So I asked him if he considered Maimonides to be a prophet. He said, "Yes, most definitely." Again, strangely enough, I had just read something about Maimonides that I found in a book titled *The*

Messiah Text, written by Raphael Patai, a secular Jew from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. This book reports that Maimonides had actually given a specific date as to when the Messiah would come. As a consequence, thousands of Jews went to Israel but were massacred by the Muslims. I asked the rabbi if he was aware of this prophecy that Maimonides had made, but he was not. I quoted Moses in Deuteronomy 18:21-22, citing that no true prophet of God could make a mistake and that our faith should not be based on a false prophet.

The rabbi got so angry that he knocked over the table. He asked me if I had proof of my accusation. I said that I would bring him his proof. We departed on that note.

That same day, I went to the Jewish Public Library in Montreal. Even though it is an English library, I found the book I needed written in French. It was not *The Messiah Text*, but the very source from which Raphael Patai got his information, a letter that Maimonides wrote to Rabbi Alfujame in Yemen in which he encouraged the community because they were under much persecution. In the letter, Maimonides calculated that the Messiah was to come in the year 1210.

I brought the book to the rabbi, and he kept it for two weeks. I went back to ask him about his conclusions. He said this was a mystery he could not explain, and he gave me the book and left. This incident taught me that no matter how much reason, logic, or proof one may use to witness to others about the Messiah, the battle is a spiritual one. 📖

¹Rashi was a medieval rabbi who lived from 1040 to 1105 in France. The equally prominent Rabbi Maimonides was born in Spain in the year 1135 and died in Egypt in 1204.



PARADISE FOUND

Isaiah 11:1-10



by Chris Eisbrenner

The underlying theme of Scripture, in both the Old and New Testaments, is the consummation of all human history in the messianic kingdom. The Scriptures teach that it will be the Messiah that will bring in this kingdom. Speaking to David about a descendant of his, the Lord says, “*But I will settle him in mine house and in my kingdom for ever: and his throne shall be established for evermore*” (1 Chronicles 17:14)

The prophet Isaiah writes of the same messianic king and kingdom:

“For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.” (Isaiah 9:6-7).

This eschatological inauguration by the Messiah constitutes the most tremendous intervention of divine power in human history. The Old and New Testament Scriptures all bear witness to this fact.

Moses speaks of the day when the Lord will return and restore Israel as a nation, “*then the LORD thy God will turn thy captivity, and have compassion upon thee, and will return and gather thee from all the nations, whither the LORD thy God hath scattered thee*” (Deuteronomy 30:3). It is at that time that God will “*make thee high above all nations which He hath made, in praise, and in name, and in honor*” (Deuteronomy 26:19). In that day, the Lord will defeat Israel’s enemies and bless them in the land. They will walk in His ways as His holy people, and “*The LORD shall make thee the head, and not the tail*” (Deuteronomy 28:7-13).

The Psalms speak again and again of this coming kingdom. They paint a graphic picture of the Messiah enthroned in Zion (Psalm 2) with the gates of Jerusalem welcoming Him (Psalm 24), ruling with peace, righteousness, and with all nations on earth serving Him (Psalm 72) as He judges the world with truth (Psalm 96).

The prophets also speak of this future time when Israel will be restored as a nation to her promised land. They confirm that Messiah will reign physically and with justice over all the earth, at a time when all of creation will be



restored to the brilliance and beauty of the Garden of Eden (Isaiah 65:17-25, Daniel 2:44; 7:13-14, Zechariah 14:3-11).

Paul, in the New Testament, bears witness of the same when he writes:

“For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God . . . because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now” (Romans 8:19-22).

Paul proclaims to church saints that they will reign with the Messiah (2 Timothy 2:12) in glorified, sinless bodies as fellow heirs (Romans 8:17), which means we will inherit what He inherits and reign where He reigns. But it is John who tells us in Revelation 19 and 20 that this will take place after the return of Yeshua when Satan is bound, and that this messianic kingdom will last for one thousand years (Revelation 20:1-6). Therefore, we can conclude from the New Testament Scriptures that the main theme is to preach to the nations their need for the Messiah, not just because there is a coming judgment, but also because there is a coming kingdom on earth. In fact, all of the historic and prophetic writings in the Old and New Testaments purposely have a central thrust which points to this coming messianic, millennial kingdom as the consummation of all human history.

The Righteous Ruler – Isaiah 11:1-5

The fact that Messiah would be the Davidic King from the line of David (the son of Jesse) is spelled out by Isaiah in the opening verse of chapter 11: *“And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots.”*

This verse, with its reference to Messiah as the righteous branch, echoes the words of Jeremiah 23:5: *“Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth.”*

Also, Isaiah 11 tells us that this branch would be uniquely filled with the Spirit of wisdom and knowledge: *“And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD”* (Isaiah 11:2).

Further this branch will be a terrifying and righteous judge:

“But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked. And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins” (Isaiah 11:4-5).

This is assurance for the poor and the meek that their cause will be dealt with righteously in that day. This period of time will be characterized by swift judgment and justice against the wicked by the Messiah who sits on the throne of David. This is the same King of kings and Lord of lords who will come back to earth in Revelation 19 to slay the wicked with the sharp sword that comes out of His mouth (Revelation 19:11-16). His millennial government will be absolute in authority and power, and no sin will go unpunished (Psalm 2:10-12; Isaiah 66:24).

Life in the Kingdom – Isaiah 11:6-9a

Messiah will reign during the millennium over the entire earth in righteousness and justice. The subjects of the millennial rule of Messiah will be those (human mortals) who survive the judgment of the Great Tribulation (Matthew 25:31-46) and will bear children in the millennium. Israel will be restored to the head of the nations (Ezekiel 20:40-42), and the church will have put on their immortal bodies to reign with the Messiah (1 Corinthians 15:51-53). But something glorious will also occur in the creation, both plant and animal:

“The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them.



And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain.”(Isaiah 11:6-9a)

The fierce and carnivorous nature of animals will come to an end in that day. The snake and the lion will pose no threat to children in the kingdom. Isaiah 35 declares that desert and wilderness areas will flourish with plant life. This will occur because *water will gush forth in the wilderness and streams in the desert* (Isaiah 35:6). Evidently, the underground supply of water will be changed to allow abundant surface water and springs. Rain will also increase in areas that used to be very dry. And Ezekiel 34:27 tells us that it will be a time of bountiful harvests, both from trees and from fields. The curse on the earth caused by Adam’s sin will be lifted, and the animal and plant kingdoms will become completely transformed and restored to their original perfect state.

One Faith, One God – Isaiah 11:9b-10

One of the most amazing aspects of this time period is that *the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea* (Isaiah 11:9b). Today we live in a world where if you mention God, people ask, “Which God?” Jesus is lumped in as just another great prophet like Buddha, Muhammad, or Gandhi. Jehovah, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (the only true God), is seen as just one of many options along with Allah, Krishna, or Brahman. The adversary has worked hard to cloud truth and blind the minds of the unbelieving (2 Corinthians 4:4). But the millennium will be different. When Yeshua returns He will destroy the wicked and only believers will enter the kingdom. The Messiah will reign physically from Jerusalem, and all other gods and religions will be thwarted and destroyed. Even Satan himself will be bound and thrown into

the abyss during this time, so as not to deceive the nations any longer (Revelation 20:2-3).

Isaiah 11:10 tells us that the Gentile nations will look to the Messiah in Jerusalem, seek Him, and find rest in His glory. There will only be one faith in the one true God, as knowledge of Him will cover the earth. This does not mean they will simply have a head-knowledge of Him, but that the whole world will live for Him and by His principles. Zechariah tells us that all the families of the earth will come up to Jerusalem to worship the King and keep the Feast of Tabernacles, and those that do not will be punished (Zechariah 14:16-19).

Conclusion

This coming millennial kingdom of God on earth is one of the major revelations of Scripture pertaining to God’s program for the ages. It is the theme of both the Old and New Testaments and the hope of all believers in every nation and time period. This is a time where the “Messiah will be reigning (Isaiah 9:6-7), Jerusalem will have prominence in the world (Isaiah 2:2), and Judah and Israel will be re-gathered to the land in belief and will be living according to the New Covenant.”¹ In fact, this period of time is the fulfillment of the Abrahamic Covenant (Genesis 15:18-21; 17:7-8; 22:17-18), the Davidic Covenant (2 Samuel 7:16; 1 Chronicles 17:11-14), and the New Covenant (Jeremiah 31:33-34), and a time when all Gentiles will be worshipers and followers of the only true God, the God of Israel, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. It will also be a time when Satan will be bound, the curse of sin removed from the land and animals, and the earth will be restored to its pre-fall brilliance. It will truly be a glorious era where paradise will be found. 📖

Endnotes

¹Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., &, Dallas Theological Seminary. (1983). *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An exposition of the Scriptures (Is 11:6-9)*. Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.



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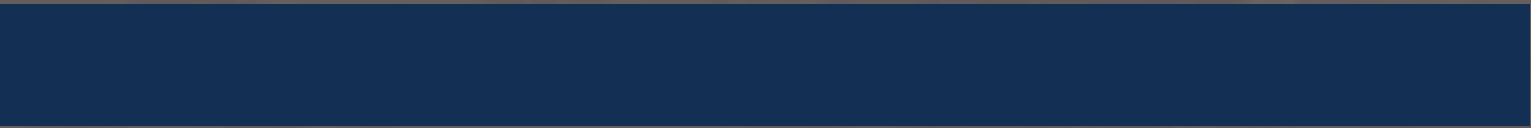
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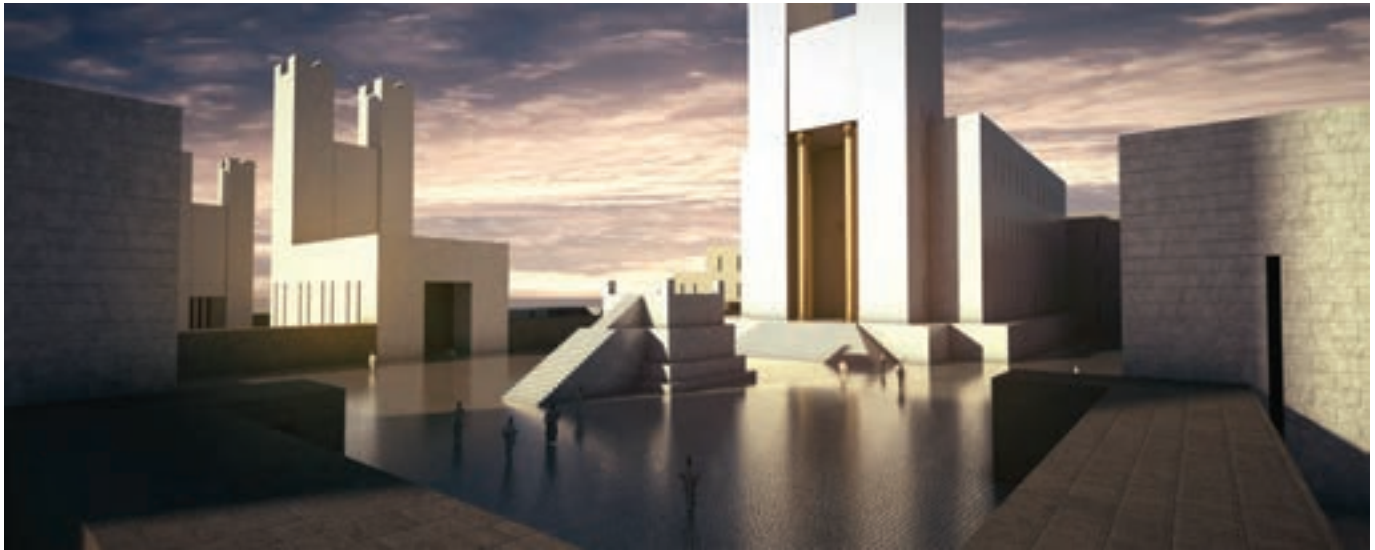




THE MILLENNIAL TEMPLE: LITERAL OR ALLEGORICAL?

By Dr. Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum

The concluding chapters of the book of Ezekiel are among the most controversial in all of Scripture. They detail a great temple and a sacrificial system that shows enough differences to the one described in the Law of Moses to warrant the thought that this is a new building in a different time period. The result is that many conflicting interpretations have been proposed both by Jewish and Christian scholars. In this article, we will critically look at these interpretations and show why a literal exegesis of Ezekiel 40–48 is possible.



The 3D Renderings were designed by Jesse and Josh Gonzales in accordance with John W. Schmitt's model of the Millennial Temple.



I. THE PROBLEM(S) OF THE EZEKIEL TEMPLE AND SACRIFICES

A. THE PROBLEM FOR JUDAISM

An Orthodox Jewish commentary makes the following two observations:

The text of the concluding chapters, dealing with this temple and the future, presents almost insurmountable difficulties. The types, numbers, and sacrifices prescribed there differ from those mentioned in the Pentateuch; and there are many

innovations, which, according to the accepted law, are normally beyond the authority of a prophet to institute (Shabbat 104a). With reference to these difficulties, the rabbis said that only Elijah, the prophet who is to herald the final redemption, will be able to explain them satisfactorily (Menachot 45a).¹

These closing chapters present almost insuperable difficulties. They contain discrepancies, contradictions with Pentateuchal laws and terms which do not occur elsewhere.²

The root of the problem for Judaism is twofold: first, the rabbis assume that the Law of Moses is eternal; second, they fail to recognize the Messiahship of Yeshua. Orthodox Judaism takes Ezekiel 40–48 literally, but because there are a number of contradictions between the Mosaic system and the Ezekiel system, the early rabbis had a difficulty in accepting Ezekiel into the Hebrew Canon. Finally one rabbi, Rabbi Hananiah ben Hezekiah, is said to have burned three hundred barrels of oil rectifying all the discrepancies, and only then was Ezekiel accepted into the Hebrew Canon.³

B. THE PROBLEM FOR AMILLENNIALISM

Amillennialists simply dismiss the literal view as untenable without providing any exegetical grounds for doing so. It is enough to state that Yeshua was the final sacrifice, and that alone becomes the grounds for



allegorizing these chapters of Ezekiel. However, even they have to admit that it is “an unjustifiable inconsistency”⁴ to take the prophecies of Israel’s final restoration literally, but then to allegorize the prophecies of the Ezekiel Temple and sacrifices, and so, the problem for amillennialists is also twofold: first, they presuppose that these chapters cannot be literal; second, they assume that these sacrifices are the Levitical sacrifices, which is not the case as will be shown later.

While amillennialists such as Daniel Block agree that Ezekiel would have understood his own prophecy quite literally, they insist that it must be reinterpreted in light of the New Testament, which they see as teaching replacement theology.⁵ They argue that since the vision of the dry bones is symbolic, then the vision of the Temple and sacrifices must also be symbolic. The fallacy of this reasoning is obvious: Ezekiel tells us that the vision of the dry bones is symbolic and interprets the symbols for us; however, he makes no such statement in chapters 40–48. If these chapters are symbolic, then Ezekiel does not interpret the symbols. In fact, throughout his book, Ezekiel has symbolic actions and visions, and when they are symbolic, he tells us so and interprets them all for us. He makes no such statement or interpretation of the Temple or sacrifices. Finally, some amillennialists claim that Ezekiel “does not offer a clear chronology of latter-day occurrences.”⁶ This ignores the chronology the book clearly gives. The only possible reason to draw such an obvious faulty conclusion is based on a simple presupposition that these chapters cannot be understood literally.

C. THE PROBLEM FOR DISPENSATIONALISTS

For dispensationalists, the problem is not the understanding of what the text states. When taken literally, there is no confusion as to the meaning of the text, and there is unanimity among dispensationalists as to what it says and means. However, the problem for dispensationalists has been in the area of what role the Millennial Temple and sacrifices actually play in the messianic kingdom and how they do not contradict or demean the final sacrifice of the Messiah on the cross. The differing interpretations will be presented below, but perhaps one observation is in

order. Do we really have to fully understand all the whys and wherefores in order to take the passage literally? Our critics claim that since we cannot justify millennial sacrifices in light of Messiah’s sacrifice, these chapters cannot be taken literally. But is such a presupposition valid? I suspect that an Old Testament saint who understood Isaiah 53 literally would have concluded that the Messiah would be the final sacrifice for sin. But how would that correlate with the Law of Moses that prohibited human sacrifices? He may not have been able to answer all the questions Isaiah 53 raised in light of the Law of Moses, but that would not have justified to allegorize the prophecies of Isaiah. In the course of progressive revelation and the coming of the Messiah, the apparent contradiction becomes clear. The same may be true with the millennial sacrifices. We may not be able to answer all the questions that the book of Hebrews raises concerning the prophecies of the book of Ezekiel, but that is not a good reason to automatically resort to interpreting Ezekiel allegorically. The final and complete answer may only present itself with further progressive revelation that will come with the return of the Messiah. As will be shown later, we do have answers to the questions raised over the literal Temple and sacrifices, but even these answers may not answer *all* the questions and issues. A lack of complete understanding regarding all the issues raised never justifies the dismissal of the literal interpretation. It is for the critic to explain exegetically from the passage itself, why it is not literal.

Ultimately, for the dispensationalist, as Dr. John C. Whitcomb has pointed out, these chapters of Ezekiel are “not a burden to the Bible student, but a delight. What joy God brings to the heart of the believer when he realizes, perhaps for the first time, that God did not give us any portion of His Word to confuse us, but rather to enlighten us. God really does mean what He says!”⁷ It gives us, who take the Bible literally, more details about the messianic kingdom and God’s future program. As with all Scripture, it gives us the opportunity to engage ourselves with the Word of God in all its details, while dismissing the idea that such a large portion of Scripture could be symbolic, thus rendering the details of the Word of God as being irrelevant.



II. DIFFERENT VIEWS OF EZEKIEL 40–48

It should be noted that the *only* reason there are so many different interpretations is because so many assume the Scriptures cannot be taken literally. Once one moves away from a literal hermeneutic to some form of allegorical hermeneutic, the next question becomes: if it does not mean what it says literally, then what does it mean? At this point, the interpreter must resort to subjectivity, and the text means what the interpreter says it means. The following is a list of the various views.

A. MEMORIAL OF THE SOLOMONIC TEMPLE

This view states that this is only a literary memorial of the Solomonic Temple, and therefore it plays nothing more than a sentimental role of remembrance of the First Temple. However, there is very little similarity between the Solomonic Temple and the Ezekiel Temple. In fact, Ezekiel contradicts many details of the system used in the Solomonic Temple.

B. THE BLUEPRINT OF THE SECOND (POST-EXILIC) TEMPLE

According to this view, Ezekiel provided a blueprint for the rebuilding of the Temple after the return from Babylon. However, if that was the case, it was never followed. Even Ezekiel would have known that his measurements would never have fit the Temple Mount of that day.

C. THE HISTORICAL VIEW

This is similar to the previous view, except the claim is that this passage only presents Ezekiel's personal hope for the kind of temple that would be built after the return from the Babylonian Captivity. If so, Ezekiel's hope was never realized, rendering these chapters meaningless. What did happen did not follow Ezekiel at all. Furthermore, Ezekiel would have known that the measurements of his Temple would not have fit the Temple Mount of his day.

D. A SYMBOL OF THE HEAVENLY STATE

This view connects Ezekiel with Revelation 21–22 and teaches that this Temple is only a symbolic depiction of what things will be like in heaven. However, the

measurements of the Ezekiel Temple, and that of the New Jerusalem in Revelation, are radically different. Revelation 21:22 states that the New Jerusalem will not have a temple in it, yet what Ezekiel describes is declared to be a temple.

E. A SYMBOL OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH

Using extreme allegory, this view states that Ezekiel is giving a depiction of the Christian church, symbolizing its origin, development, influence, and completion. Not only does this view require extreme allegorization of the text of Ezekiel, it must also ignore all the details of the text, including the geographical notations as well as the people involved. Further, it renders all the details of the text meaningless and irrelevant, while ignoring the fact that the angel warns Ezekiel to record all the minute details of the structures that will make up the Millennial Temple compound. This is a view that begins with the presupposition that the church is the New Israel.

F. A SYMBOL OF WORSHIP

This view rejects that these chapters are either prophetic, apocalyptic, or practical. It states that they only symbolize the fact that worship was the center of life in the confusion of world events of that day, and so the temple in the heart of the Ezekiel vision was a symbol that worship was the heart of world culture. This view also requires that the details of the text be ignored and derives a meaning from the passage that is simply not there, but must be imposed on the text.

G. A SYMBOL OF A SPIRITUAL ESCHATOLOGICAL KINGDOM

This view recognizes the apocalyptic nature of these chapters, but claims that the symbols found in the text are merely idealized pictures of spiritual truths that will be relevant in the coming kingdom. It makes no attempt to define the actual form of worship described by Ezekiel. This view must ignore all the details of the text and interpret the apocalyptic form as only a literary device in a way that goes beyond the normal use of the apocalyptic method. It is clear that the passage does provide the actual form of the type and means of worship in a very literal kingdom (Ez. 43:11).



H. THE LITERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE LITERAL TEMPLE IN THE MILLENNIUM

This view contains the literal description of the Fourth Temple. Like the book of Revelation, this passage is apocalyptic and therefore contains symbolic imagery, but it is also prophetic in that it describes literal future events. In his commentary on Ezekiel, Lamar Eugene Cooper describes this view as follows:

The prophetic-apocalyptic view of the passage regards the chapters as an essentially literal description of a real future kingdom. This restored kingdom is not the church but Israel. But while describing literal features of a restored kingdom, Ezekiel also conveys spiritual truth. The very objects he describes, such as a literal temple, priesthood, and sacrifices also function

as symbols of the character of the kingdom and its King.⁸

As the above list shows, only one view accepts the text as literal and *all* other views approach it allegorically. However, they are in total disagreement among themselves as to what the allegory means. This shows just how subjective the allegorical method really is, and it proves the advantage of the literal approach since one is then bound by the meaning of the words of the text in context and therefore is much more objective. What follows is a defense of the literal approach.

III. THE ARGUMENTS IN FAVOR OF A LITERAL INTERPRETATION

First: All of the theologies use the literal approach to hermeneutics for at least parts of the Bible. However,





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only the dispensationalist uses the method consistently. Such a consistent usage leads to the conclusion that there will be a Millennial Temple and sacrifice.

Second: Ezekiel is not the only one to speak of the Millennial Temple and sacrifices. Other prophets spoke of these things in a non-apocalyptic context. The Millennial Temple is spoken of in Isaiah 2:3, 60:13, Daniel 9:24, Joel 3:18, and Haggai 2:7, 9. The millennial sacrifices are mentioned in Isaiah 56:6-7, 60:7, 66:18-23, Jeremiah 33:18, Malachi 3:3-4, and Zechariah 14:16-21 (this last passage speaks of the observance of the Feast of Tabernacles in the messianic kingdom, but it required special sacrifices as part of its observance). Therefore, more than one passage, and more than one prophet, would have to be allegorized if there is no Millennial Temple or sacrifices.

Third: The Millennial Temple is not the only temple that Ezekiel describes. In chapters 8–11, he describes the departure of the *Shechinah* glory from the First Temple. All agree that his description of the Temple and the events are very literal. In chapters 40–48, Ezekiel describes the future return of the *Shechinah* glory into the Fourth Temple. If what he said about the First Temple was literal, then what he says about the Fourth Temple should also be taken literally.

Fourth: Ezekiel provides a tremendous amount of detail, including specific measurements and types of sacrifices. All accept the details of the sacrifices of the Law of Moses to be very literal. All accept the detailed measurements of the Tabernacle and the First Temple to be very literal. There is no good reason not to accept the details of the Fourth Temple to be equally literal. If they are not, and all are symbolic, then why does Ezekiel not explain the meanings of these symbols? Why have those who take these passages as allegorical and symbolic not been able to give explanations for what the symbols mean? This is not to deny that the Millennial Temple and sacrifices are not symbolic of spiritual truths. Just as the Tabernacle and the Mosaic sacrifices were symbolic and typological of spiritual truths while very literal themselves, by the same token, the Millennial Temple and sacrifices can be literal while also being symbolic of spiritual truths. The very fact that Ezekiel was ordered to write down all the details and declare them to Israel would be meaningless if such details did not mean what they said. As Thomas Ice has observed: "The literal interpretation of the Bible and Bible prophecy stands, especially when one considers the fact that the critics cannot tell us, based upon a textual interpretation, what Ezekiel does mean if not taken literally."⁹



IV. OBJECTIONS AND ANSWERS TO A LITERAL MESSIANIC TEMPLE AND SACRIFICE

First Objection: If we take Ezekiel 40–48 literally, it would mean a return to the sacrificial system of the Mosaic Law, which ended when Messiah died. This, therefore, violates all that the New Testament teaches about the termination of the law as a rule of life.

Answer: While there are many similarities with the sacrifices of the Mosaic Law, as there are between the sacrifices of Noah and Moses, the differences show they are not the same. It was these very differences that kept the rabbis from accepting Ezekiel into the Hebrew Canon for some time. In the consecration of the altar (Mosaic Law: Ex. 29:1-37; Millennial Law: Ez. 43:18-27), there are the following differences:

1. For the Sin Offering

Sacrificial System according to Moses	Sacrificial System according to Ezekiel
Anoints the altar	No anointing of the altar
Demands a sin offering in form of a bullock for all seven days	Demands a bullock only on the first day
No goat offered	Goats have to be offered for the last six days
Blood applied on the horns of the altar	Blood applied on the horns, the corners, and the lower molding round about

2. For the Burnt Offering

Sacrificial System according to Moses	Sacrificial System according to Ezekiel
A ram every day	A bullock and a ram every day
A ram for the consecration of the priesthood	No ram for the consecration for the priesthood
Ark of the Covenant	No Ark of the Covenant (Jer. 3:16)

3. Additional Differences

Sacrificial System according to Moses	Sacrificial System according to Ezekiel
Only the high priest could enter the Holy of Holies	All priests will be able to enter (Ez. 44:15-16)
Rules of marriage applicable only to the high priest	Applicable to all priests (Ez. 44:22)
The first of Nisan was not a special holy day	The first of Nisan is a special holy day (Ez. 45:18)



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4. Procedure Described in Ezekiel 45:19

Sacrificial System according to Moses

Male goat

Disposed the animal outside the camp

Sacrificial System according to Ezekiel

Bullock

Disposed of the animal inside the camp

5. Concerning the Passover (Ez. 45:21-24)

Sacrificial System according to Moses

A family affair with the head of the household performing the ritual

A one day festival

Offering of an unblemished lamb

Sacrificial System according to Ezekiel

The Prince will perform the ritual on behalf of the nation

Seven day festival

Offering of a bullock

There are also differences in the measures of the meal offerings and in the number of sacrifices offered (Mosaic Law: Num. 28:16-24).

6. Concerning the Feast of Tabernacles (Ez. 45:25)

There is a difference in the quantity of the offerings (Num. 29:12-34), and the Ezekiel system does not have the added eighth day that the Mosaic Law demanded (Num. 29:35-38).

7. Concerning the Sabbath Offerings (Ez. 46:4-5)

The Ezekiel system requires six lambs and a ram, which is more than the Mosaic Law required (Num. 28:9, two lambs and a ram). The same will be true with the meal offering.

8. Concerning the New Moon Offerings (Ez. 46:6-7)

Sacrificial System according to Moses

Two bulls, one ram, seven lambs

Sacrificial System according to Ezekiel

One bullock, one ram, six lambs

9. Concerning the Daily Offering (Ez. 46:13-15)

Sacrificial System according to Moses

Two lambs each day both morning and evening (Ex. 29:38-42; Num. 28:3-4)

Sacrificial System according to Ezekiel

One lamb each morning and none in the evening

10. Concerning the Feast of Tabernacles

Sacrificial System according to Moses

Mandatory for Jews only

Sacrificial System according to Ezekiel

Mandatory for both Jews and Gentiles (Zech. 14:16-21)



II. Concerning the Priesthood

Sacrificial System according to Moses

Only Jews could be priests

Sacrificial System according to Ezekiel

Gentiles will also serve as priests (Isa. 66:18-21)

All these differences show that this is not a return to the Law of Moses, but it is a new system under Kingdom Law. Therefore, Ezekiel 40–48 does not violate what the New Testament teaches concerning the termination of the law with Messiah's death.


Second Objection: The measurements given by Ezekiel will not fit the Temple Mount and therefore cannot be literal.

Answer: This objection is true, but it is a misconception that the Ezekiel Temple was intended to be built on that mount. The details Ezekiel gives show that major geographical changes will occur, resulting from the second coming. Some of these changes will create a new temple mount all together.

Third Objection: To believe in the reinstatement of the blood sacrifices is heresy.

Answer: Since when is taking the Bible literally a heresy? The burden of proof is always on the one who claims that a certain part of the Bible does not mean what it says. Whitcomb adds, "Just because animal sacrifices and priests have no place in Christianity does not mean that they will have no place in Israel

after the rapture of the Church; for there is a clear distinction made throughout the Scriptures between Israel and the Church."¹⁰

In summary, we can say that the discrepancies between Ezekiel's Temple and any other temple described in the Scriptures would evaporate if those who interpret the Bible would concede that there is a new law in operation during the messianic kingdom. Instead of insisting on the doctrine that the Mosaic Law is eternal or trying to harmonize the different passages by wildly allegorizing the text, one has to simply accept the fact that Ezekiel's Temple is a literal building constructed by a repentant and restored nation of Israel, and in which they will worship the Lord by sacrifices during a time when Messiah Himself will reign over the earth. An article in a future issue of the Ariel Magazine will elaborate on the purposes of the millennial sacrifices. 

(Footnotes)

1 Abraham Cohen, ed. Soncino Books of the Bible: Ezekiel, 10th ed., Vol. 7 (London: Soncino, 1985), p. xi.

2 Ibid., p. 265.

3 Menachot 45a

4 C. F. Keil, Franz Delitzsch, Commentary on the Old Testament (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2006), p. 157.

5 Daniel I. Block, The Book of Ezekiel: Chapters 1-24 (New International Commentary on the Old Testament) (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1997), pp. 56-57.

6 Ibid.

7 John C. Whitcomb, "The Millennial Temple of Ezekiel 40–48," The Diligent Workman Journal, May 1994, p. 18.

8 Lamar Eugene Cooper Sr., Ezekiel: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Holy Scripture (The New American Commentary, vol. 17) (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1994), pp. 352-53.

9 Thomas Ice, "Why Literal Sacrifices in the Millennium," Pre-Trib Perspectives, June 2000.

10 John C. Whitcomb. "The Millennial Temple of Ezekiel 40–48". The Diligent Workman Journal, May 1994, pg. 22.



branch updates

China



We are so happy to announce that since the Ariel China branch began, we now have seven brothers and sisters who have joined our team, all of whom are volunteers. So far, we have translated five books: 1) *The Remnant of Israel*; 2) *Ha-Mashiach: The Messiah in the Hebrew Scriptures*; 3) *The Harmony of the Gospels*; 4) *The Messianic Jewish Epistles*; 5) *The Student's Manual of the Life of Messiah*.

The first three books were published through Ariel USA at the Home Office. The first part of *The Messianic Jewish Epistles*, the commentary on the books of Hebrews, was published in Taiwan. The others are waiting to be proofread and edited. In addition, we also translated a few manuscripts, which also need to undergo the proofreading process.

These materials were given to ministers in 12 different provinces of China. Although the number is limited, ministers from 10 of those provinces have attended our primary teaching and training. We pray that our Father would grant us strength and wisdom to translate more books and other materials and get them published in China. We plan to do more teaching, so please continue to keep our branch in your prayers. Our goal is to train mature teachers, while setting up training centers in different parts of China.



Hungary



We shared with you in our last update the good news that Arnold is coming next year to Hungary in August 2016. We have started organizing his trip, beginning with a five-day conference in Budapest. Now, we already have the partners in place, and we are very excited! During two days at this conference, we will be working directly with Jews for Jesus. This is a good opportunity to emphasize the “Jewish connections” of the conference. There is a great need at the evangelical community to learn more about the Jewish Saviour and about the Jewish roots. We hope that we will reach more Jewish people through our efforts. As you know, Budapest has one of the biggest Jewish communities in Europe, with more than one hundred thousand Jews currently living here.

At the end of November, I taught the book of Romans at the Logos Bible School in Miskolc, which is one of the biggest cities in Hungary. The five-hour teaching went very well. I could focus mainly on the important Jewish parts of the letter while summarizing the other parts. This special emphasis was quite new for the students, and I received many questions during this course. We hope that this will be the start of a new connection for Ariel Hungary.

Our small, home-based messianic community is going very well. We feel free to teach and speak about things that are important to us spiritually. This year, the main emphasis is on the messianic prophecies.

At our bi-weekly Bible study at the Jewish quarter, we have finished the first part of the *Life of Messiah* series with 15-20 participants. We are continuing the teaching this year. Please pray that the disciples stay committed, and please pray for increased attendance.



Australia



G'day

from Australia. In February 2016, it will be 12 months since I was asked to take over the Australian branch, replacing Paul the previous branch representative. I remember him telling me that there was many hours involved each week in the administrative day-to-day running of the ministry. He was right.

Jacques Gabizon, the director of Ariel Canada and the liaison for the international branches of Ariel Ministries, said to me, "Oh, you will be okay. Take it on, and you will be blessed in Jewish ministry." Well, he was also right.

The first year is almost over, and I have no doubt that this is what I have been called to do; making disciples of Yeshua through evangelizing, baptizing, and intensive Bible teaching from its Jewish perspective.

This past year, our primary focus has been on the teaching aspect of the ministry. I have specifically

set out to do this because of the need to stress the importance of the church's relationship to the Jewish people and to the nation of Israel. In doing so, those who understand will now become personally involved in bringing the gospel of Messiah Jesus to the Jew first and then the Gentile in whatever capacity they can. As the church blesses the Jew in bringing the gospel, then there is a special blessing for the church and the individual as per the outworking of the Abrahamic Covenant ... "I will bless those who bless you."

We are continuing to teach a weekly *Life of Messiah* course, which teaches the life of Yeshua based on the context and culture of first-century Israel from the Jewish frame of reference. This will always be one of the foundational courses that we teach. New folk are being added continually to this class, and the reaction is always the same: "Why weren't we told this before?" or "Now I understand." All the questions that arise while doing this course, and there are many, is an



added bonus to our learning. Currently, we are doing this course during a night session, but we will be adding another day session to meet the needs of others who are interested.

We are also continuing our daytime class during the week where we are nearing the end of our study of the Minor Prophets. There are only three more to go. After this, the class has requested that we study the book of Revelation in order to bring us up to speed regarding where the world is headed.

There is increasing evidence regarding an ever-widening gap in the basic foundational truths of the faith within parts of the church. The *Come and See* program would address this issue, and this is one area we are also hoping to focus on over the next few months.

We were able to complete three of our bi-monthly seminars last year. These typically run for about 3-4 hours each. We completed *Times of the Gentiles*, *Sequence of Pre-Trib Events*, *The Church and the Rapture*, *The Five Covenants with Israel*, and *Can the Jew be Destroyed*. These were conducted at our home office in Geelong, Victoria, during the second Saturday of the month. I also had the privilege of sharing the last one with Capital Bible Church in Canberra, in the Australian Capital Territory on November 21 and 22.

Our first of six head office based seminars this year will be on February 20. The topic will be *The Messiah from Passover to Pentecost*. This will lead in to our *Messianic Passover Haggadah* celebration, which we will hold in March.

The evangelistic mission begins in March in the Melbourne Eruv, the largest Jewish community in Australia where there are 30+ synagogues. *Celebrate Messiah* is another Jewish ministry based in that area. They affectionately call it the "Holy Land of Australia."



They Broaden Their Phylacteries

by Mottel Baleston

If you are like many Christians, coming across a verse like the one above will make you wrinkle your forehead for a moment, assume it's something you won't understand, and then continue reading. However, you're reading *Ariel Magazine*, so you appreciate the fact that the original Jewish context of the New Testament will help you understand what this verse means. This article will discuss the phylacteries; in the next issue, we'll talk about the 'fringes'. Great, let's get started.

The word "phylacteries" in Matthew 23:5 is the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew word *tefillin*. That word is well known in traditional Jewish circles, as it describes small leather boxes containing Scripture verses that are strapped to the arm and forehead of Orthodox Jewish men during their weekday morning prayers. The practice of wearing the tefillin and meditating on the verses found therein is based upon four Scripture passages: Exodus 13:9 and 13:16 and Deuteronomy 6:8 and 11:18. The set of tefillin contains very small hand-written scrolls on which those verses from Exodus and Deuteronomy are found.

You shall put these words of mine on your heart and on your soul; and you shall tie them for a sign upon your arm, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. (Deut. 11:18)

But all their works they do to be seen by men: for they make broad their phylacteries, and lengthen the fringes of their garments. Matthew 23:5





While Orthodox men are usually careful to keep this observance, it should be remembered that only about 15 percent of the Jewish population worldwide is Orthodox. While traditions vary among various strains of Orthodox Jews regarding the exact design of the tefillin and methods for tying them for the morning prayers, their daily use does serve as a reminder of just how deeply these ingrained traditions give routine, structure, and direction to Orthodox life. The tefillin are not worn on Shabbat, as the routines for that day are very different than for weekdays.

Attached to each box are black leather straps that allow the person wearing the phylacteries to bind them on specific parts of their bodies. The tefillin that goes on the arm is called *shel yad* (*yad* being the Hebrew word for hand). It is placed on the upper left arm, and the suspended leather straps are wound around the arm, hand, and the middle finger. The tefillin placed on the head is called *shel rosh* (*rosh* being the Hebrew word for head). It is placed just above the forehead. The box of the arm-tefillin consists of a single compartment into which all four Scriptures, written on a single strip, are inserted. The head-tefillin has four separate compartments, one for each of the four verses.

The Hebrew letter *shin* is inscribed on the leather box of the head-tefillin. On the right side, the *shin* is written with three strokes. On the left side, a highly unusual *shin* is made with four staffs, which correlate to the four compartments and four verses inside the box. The craftsmanship that goes into a pair of tefillin is meticulous and governed by hundreds of traditional rules found in the Talmud. The cases are made from a single piece of thick leather, with the scroll strips being the special type of parchment that is also found in Torah scrolls. And just like Torah scrolls, a carefully trained scribe takes a quill pen, and using hand-produced vegetable ink based on

ancient formulas, carefully writes the verses, a process of artistic calligraphy that takes about 10 hours. For this reason, a new pair of tefillin will typically sell for a minimum of \$300.

I grew up in Brooklyn in a neighborhood where both religious and secular Jews lived. On many days, I would see young men from the Hasidic Orthodox Yeshiva (rabbinical seminary) out and about looking for Jewish boys and men who were not as religious as they. As soon as you answered that you were Jewish, they would ask, “Have you put on tefillin yet today?” They were seeking to encourage the observance of this *mitzvah*, this commandment. After coming to faith, I would always take the opportunity to stop and allow them to put the tefillin on me, and during the process, I would share my story of coming to faith in Messiah Yeshua! The conversations that ensued were amazing and deserve a special article all by themselves.

In the Deuteronomy 6 passage, the preceding verses talk of the well-known practice of placing a *mezuzah* scroll on the doorpost of Jewish homes. This was always understood to be taken literally, and the predominant evidence is that the practice of wearing the tefillin boxes as part of Mosaic Law was also taken literally, not figuratively. There are both Jewish and non-Jewish ancient writings that show





the practice to have been prevalent during the period of the second Temple, with several sources referencing its use in the first century BC.

That brings us to a very interesting point: Messiah Yeshua kept Mosaic Law perfectly. We have several instances in the New Testament that demonstrate this. In Matthew 9:20, we see that He wore the *tallit/tzitzit* fringes commanded in the Mosaic Law. While in Matthew 23:9 He cautions against the misuse of those fringes, it still must be kept in mind that Yeshua Himself, living under the dispensation of the Mosaic Law, voluntarily subjected Himself to all the provisions of that law. That means Messiah Jesus wore tefillin. However, it must be remembered that He wore them during the period in which the Mosaic Law was the rule of life for Jewish believers.

Believers today are no longer under the obligation to keep that law, because it came to an end when the dispensation ended at the cross. (For a detailed discussion of this, see Dr. Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum, *Faith Alone: The Condition of our Salvation*.) This reinforces an additional lesson: simply because Jesus did something during the time He was on earth does not mean it is a commandment for believers today. This has become a disputed issue in parts of the messianic movement as well as the Hebrew roots movement, segments of which teach a current obligation to keep all of these physical items of the Mosaic Law. They pressure the doubtful with the following line: "If Jesus did these things, shouldn't you?"

Once it is understood that believers today are not under obligation of to keep the Law of Moses, these confusions and disputes are answered.

Now, back to the question at the top of the article . . . what did Jesus mean by *they broaden their phylacteries*? The phylacteries/tefillin case seems to have always been the same size, about two inches (45 mm) square. They are held onto the arm and

head by straps. In earliest times, those straps seem to have been thin. By the time that Messiah Jesus makes His earthly appearance, it was the custom of some Pharisees to use wider leather straps that were dyed black and buffed and polished to glossy sheen. In this way, their observance of this commandment would be noticed and seen by all. That is why Messiah charges them with putting on a religious show for appearance's sake.

Thus, we are reminded of the verse: man looks at the outward appearance, but God looks upon the heart. (1 Samuel 16:7)

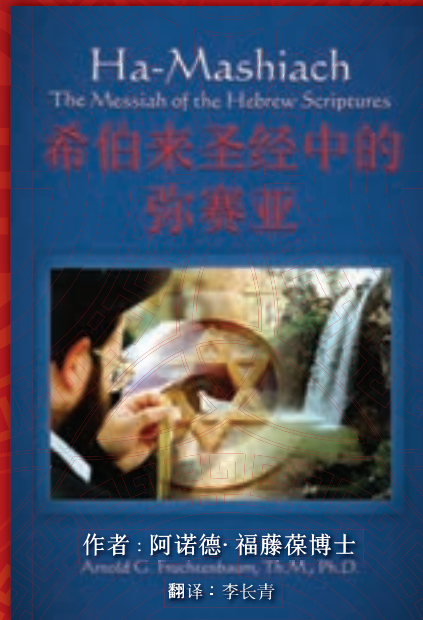
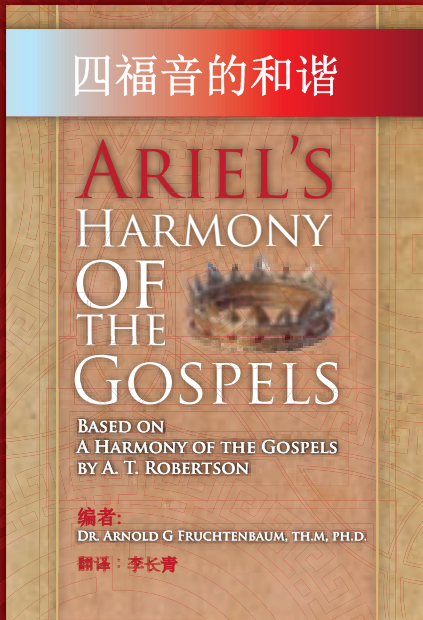


While I dearly value my Jewish heritage and love and practice the culture (1 Cor. 9:20), I need to ask: Do I ever do things for the sake of religious appearance? Do you? It's a sobering question we must ask ourselves. As believers in Messiah Yeshua, we know His promise that He will write His word and His will upon hearts that are soft, hearts that are truly yielded to Him. Let's not *broaden the straps of our phylacteries* and do things for the sake of religious appearance, but let's be yielded so He can accomplish His will through our lives. ❏

Mottel Baleston is the director of the Messengers Messianic Jewish Outreach of New Jersey and a teacher at Ariel's School of Messianic Jewish Studies. This text is the first of a series of articles that will look at different items and terms found in the Scriptures, while offering an understanding of these topics from the Jewish context and culture of the first century and today.



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