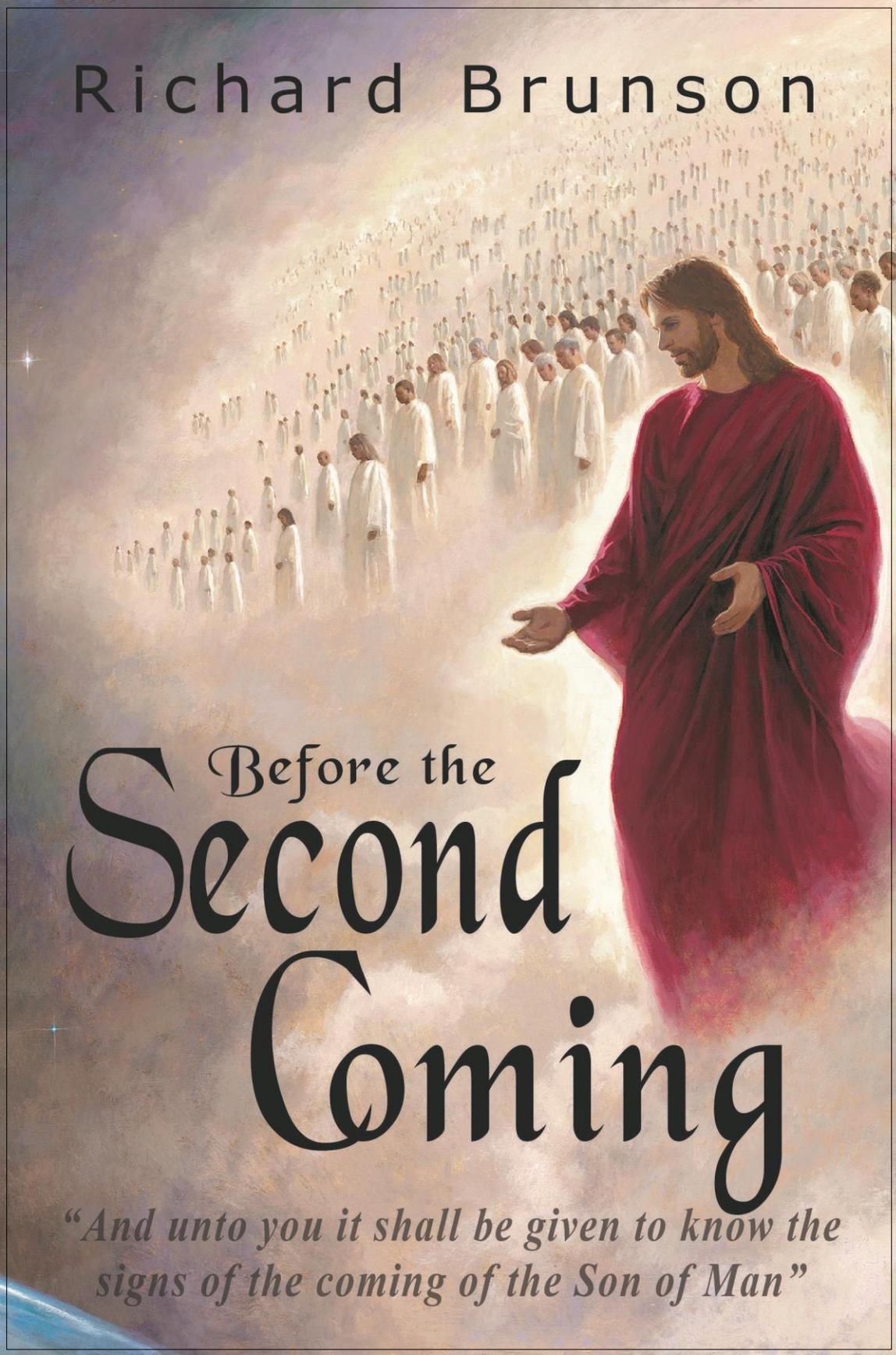


Richard Brunson



Before the
**Second
Coming**

*“And unto you it shall be given to know the
signs of the coming of the Son of Man”*

Before the Second Coming

*And unto you it shall be given to know
the signs of the coming of the*

Son of Man ~ D&C 68:11

Richard Brunson

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Chapter 11

Armageddon

As we have just seen, after the fifth angel sounds his trump, Satan and all his hosts of evil spirits will be loosed from the bottomless pit. When this occurs, they will be allowed to use more of their power and influence to tempt and afflict mankind. Currently, God has set limits on what Satan and his one third are able to do; however, at this point in our story, God will have sufficiently warned the wicked inhabitants of the earth by way of the first four angels, and those who have still chosen not to repent by this time will be delivered into Satan's power (see D&C 1:35).¹

We are told that once the sixth angel sounds his trump, Satan and his hosts will use this added power to assemble together a "mighty army" (Ezekiel 38:15), which, according to John the Revelator, will consist of 200 million soldiers (see Revelation 9:16; Revelation 16:14-16). The prophet Zechariah even tells us that this army will be made up of all nations of the earth (see Zechariah 14:2), which helps to explain its large numbers. In fact, only those living in Zion will be out of its reach (see D&C 45:66-70).

Gog and Magog

¹ See also *Journal of Discourses*, 7:189.

The prophet Ezekiel tells us that this army will be led by a man who will be known as “Gog” (Ezekiel 38:2). Ezekiel, in addition to revealing this man’s identity, even tells us that this “Gog” will come from “the land of Magog” (Ezekiel 38:2), which is located somewhere in or around modern-day Russia.²

Because Gog is said to be from the land of Magog, his army has often been referred to as Magog as well.³ Therefore, the common phrase, “Gog and Magog,” simply refers to a military leader (Gog) and his army (Magog).

We learn from the prophet Joel that this army will be the strongest army that the world has ever seen up to this point in time:

a great people and a strong; there hath not been ever the like, neither shall be any more after it (Joel 2:2).⁴

Joel also tells us that after this army has been assembled, they will go forth conquering every nation in their path:

A fire devoureth before them; and behind them a flame burneth: the land is as the garden of Eden before them, and behind them a desolate wilderness; yea, and nothing shall escape them (Joel 2:3).

² Jeffery, *Armageddon: Appointment with Destiny*, p. 103-108. See also Brandt, *The Book of Revelation—Things Which Must Shortly Come To Pass*, p. 205; *Old Testament Student Manual*, 2:292.

³ *Old Testament Student Manual*, 2:284.

⁴ See also *Old Testament Student Manual*, 2:293.

In the midst of this rampage, we are told by the prophet Zechariah that Gog and Magog will attempt to come up “against Jerusalem to battle” (Zechariah 14:2).⁵

The Setting at Jerusalem

By this time, the Jews who were previously scattered throughout the world will have gathered together at Jerusalem. We are told that some of these Jews will have been converted to the gospel of Jesus Christ by this time (see 2 Nephi 30:7; 2 Nephi 30:5-7; 2 Nephi 6:11; 2 Nephi 25:15-18; Mormon 5:14), however, the majority of the Jews will have not. Elder Orson Pratt explained:

The Jews dispersed among the Gentiles...will go to Jerusalem. Some of them will believe in the true Messiah, and thousands of the more righteous, whose fathers did not consent to the shedding of the blood of the Son of God, will receive the Gospel before they gather from among the nations. Many of them, however, will not receive the Gospel, but seeing that others are going to Jerusalem they will go also; and when they get back to Palestine, to the place where their ancient Jerusalem stood, and see a certain portion of the believing Jews endeavoring to fulfill and carry out the prophecies, they also will take hold and assist in the same work. At the same time they will have their synagogues, in which they will preach against Jesus of Nazareth, “that impostor,” as they call him, who was crucified by their fathers.⁶

⁵ See also Joel 3:1; Zechariah 12:1-2.

⁶ *Journal of Discourses*, 18: 64-65.

Once the Jews have gathered at Jerusalem, the Lord will raise up a righteous leader among them whom the scriptures call “David” (Jeremiah 30:9; Ezekiel 34:23-24),⁷ or “The Branch” (Zechariah 6:12). Whether this David will be converted to the restored gospel of Jesus Christ we do not know. However, we do know that he will be a very righteous man, and that he will come from Jewish descent, being a literal descendant of King David (see Jeremiah 23:5-6).⁸

Under the direction of this great Jewish leader, we are told that the Temple of Solomon will be rebuilt. Zechariah prophesied:

Behold the man whose name is The Branch...he shall build the temple of the LORD (Zechariah 6:12).

Of this temple, Joseph Smith said:

Judah must return, Jerusalem must be rebuilt, and the temple...and all this must be done before the Son of Man will make His appearance.⁹

⁷ See also *History of the Church* 6:253.

⁸ We should mention here that there are two schools of thought regarding the identity of this latter-day David. The first is the interpretation presented above; the second is that this David is none other than Christ himself (see for example, McConkie, *The Promised Messiah*, pp. 192–95). However, because the Jewish temple will be rebuilt under David’s direction (see Zechariah 6:12), and because this temple will be built before Christ appears to the Jews at Jerusalem during the battle of Armageddon (Smith, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, p. 286), we have chosen to treat this David as a separate person from Christ in this work.

⁹ Smith, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, p. 286.

As Joseph Smith here indicates, the Jewish temple is to be rebuilt at Jerusalem *before* Christ makes his appearance. This will be important to remember as our story progresses.

We are told that once rebuilt, this Jewish temple will be similar in size and shape to the original Temple of Solomon, and that it will be built in the same place where the original Temple of Solomon once stood. Elder Orson Pratt made this clear when he said that “Jerusalem shall be redeemed *and a temple established upon its former foundation* in the holy land.”¹⁰

It is important to point out that this temple cannot be rebuilt at the present time. As a result of the Arab-Israeli war of 1967, the Jews gained control of Jerusalem, and subsequently, the mount where the original Temple of Solomon once stood. This means that the Jews could technically begin construction on this temple any time they desire. However, the Jews have made it very clear that they will not begin construction at any time in the immediate future. Why not?

Currently, this temple mount is being occupied by a beautiful Muslim shrine known as the Dome of the Rock.

The Dome of the Rock

The Dome of the Rock, built by the Muslims in the seventh century, was constructed over a sacred limestone rock, which,

¹⁰ *Journal of Discourses*, 20:148; emphasis added.



The Dome of the Rock



Inside the Dome of the Rock

according to the Islamic religion, was the same rock from which their prophet Mohammed ascended into heaven during a night vision.¹¹ Furthermore, this rock is also the traditional spot where Abraham, the great ancestor of both Arabs and Jews, offered up his son Isaac as a sacrifice.¹²

There is also a Jewish tradition, however, that states that beneath the Dome of the Rock “lies the white outcropping of rock which is supposed to have been the spot occupied by the Holy of Holies belonging to Solomon’s temple.”¹³

If this tradition proves to be accurate, then before the Jewish temple could be rebuilt in its original location, the Dome of the Rock must first, somehow, somehow, be demolished. This is what Elder Charles W. Penrose predicted would occur when he stated:

The work is moving on for the gathering of the Jews to their own land that they may build it up as it was in former times; that the temple may be rebuilt and the mosque of the Moslem which now stands in its place may be moved out of the way; that Jerusalem may be rebuilt upon its original site.¹⁴

What makes this complicated, however, is the fact that Muslims leaders have made it clear that if the Jews were to remove this sacred shrine, “there would be Jihad—Holy

¹¹ Skousen, *Fantastic Victory—Israel’s Rendezvous with Destiny*, p. 160.

¹² Skousen, *Fantastic Victory—Israel’s Rendezvous with Destiny*, p. 160.

¹³ Skousen, *Fantastic Victory—Israel’s Rendezvous with Destiny*, p. 160.

¹⁴ *Journal of Discourses*, 24:215.

War!”¹⁵ Therefore, out of respect for the Islamic religion, and to avoid a conflict, the Jews have stated that they would not tear down the Dome of the Rock in order to rebuild their Jewish temple.¹⁶

But what is more, even if the Dome of the Rock were to collapse or be damaged in any way, either by natural disasters or by other means outside of Jewish control, “Israeli law would demand that it be rebuilt as it was originally constructed.”¹⁷ Thus, the possibility of rebuilding the Jewish temple in place of the Dome of the Rock, at least at the present time, appears to be impossible barring a miracle from God.

Of course, there is also the possibility that the original Temple of Solomon was not built where the Dome of the Rock now stands, but on the ground next to it. Back in 2005, “the Sanhedrin considered the three logical possibilities for the historical location of the First and Second [Jewish] Temples. The first possibility: Solomon’s Temple was centered with its Holy of Holies on the rock that today sits within the thirteen-hundred-year-old Dome of the Rock. The second possibility: Solomon’s Temple was located to the north of the Dome of the Rock on an east-west line directly opposite the Eastern

¹⁵ Skousen, *Fantastic Victory—Israel’s Rendezvous with Destiny*, p. 15; see also p. 268.

¹⁶ According to Grant R. Jeffery, “Since the Six-Day War in 1967, Israel has controlled the entire city of Jerusalem, including the Temple Mount. However, Israel allows the Supreme Muslim Religious Council (the Waqf) to control religious activities and to police (without firearms) all activities on the Temple Mount. This area is the location of the Dome of the Rock and the Al-Aqsa Mosque” (Jeffery, *The New Temple and the Second Coming*, p. 4).

¹⁷ Jeffery, *The New Temple and the Second Coming*, p. 21-22.

Gate. The third possibility: the Temple was built to the south of the Dome of the Rock near the location of the Al-Aqsa Mosque, close to the southern wall of the Temple Mount.”¹⁸

This means that as of today, the jury as to where exactly the temple of Solomon was located is still out. However, if the Sanhedrin are able to one day determine, either through archeology or some other means, that Solomon’s Temple occupied the space next to the Dome of the Rock, then the Jewish temple and the Dome of the Rock could potentially, one day, coexist together on the same Temple Mount. In fact, this may be what John the Revelator was describing when, during his vision of the Battle of Armageddon, an angel told him to, “Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein. *But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles*” (Revelation 11:1-2).

In analyzing this verse, we must ask ourselves why it was that an angel told John that the courtyard of the newly rebuilt Temple of Solomon would belong to the Gentiles during the Battle of Armageddon. Was it because the Temple of Solomon will be rebuilt *next* to the Dome of the Rock on the Temple Mount? If this proves to be true, then the future courtyard of this Jewish temple, also called “the court of the Gentiles,”¹⁹ would overlap with, and therefore occupy the same space as, the Dome of the Rock.

While this scenario seems more likely than the first, we must still consider that as of right now, constructing a Jewish

¹⁸ Jeffery, *The New Temple and the Second Coming*, p. 108.

¹⁹ *Bible Dictionary*, p. 781, under “Temple of Herod.”

temple next to Dome of the Rock on the Temple Mount would also require a miracle. According to a 2009 article published in *The Jerusalem Post*, the founder of the Islamic Movement in Israel, Sheikh Abdulla Nimar Darwish, warned against any attempt to rebuild the Temple next to the Dome of the Rock, stating, “As long as there is a Muslim alive, no Jewish Temple will be built on [the Temple Mount]. The status quo must be maintained, otherwise there will be bloodshed.”²⁰

Nevertheless, we are told that eventually, somehow, the Jews will rebuild their temple, and it will be erected where the original Temple of Solomon once stood.

Naturally, once this temple has been rebuilt the Jews will once again have a place for performing the animal sacrifices that were originally required under the Law of Moses. As we shall see, this is exactly what the Jews will proceed to do once this temple is rebuilt.

The Ark of the Covenant

One of the more interesting possibilities that may occur in connection with the rebuilding of the Jerusalem temple is the return of the ark of the covenant.

The ark of the covenant was originally built during the first year of Israel’s wandering in the wilderness, when the Lord instructed Moses to “make an ark of [acacia] wood.... And thou shalt overlay it with pure gold” (Exodus 25:10-11).

²⁰ Wagner, “Can Third Temple be built without destroying Dome of the Rock?” *The Jerusalem Post*, June 21, 2009.

The ark was also covered by a “mercy seat of pure gold” (Exodus 25:17), which included two winged cherubs that faced each other (Exodus 25:18-20). Inside the ark included, among other sacred objects, the second tables of stone written by the hand of God, which included the Ten Commandments.²¹

With a few exceptions, the ark rested in the innermost sanctuary of the tabernacle—the Holy of Holies—from the time of Moses until the temple of Solomon was built at Jerusalem. Once the temple of Solomon was built, “the priests brought in the ark of the covenant...into the oracle of the [temple], to the most holy place” (1 Kings 8:6).

The last time the ark of the covenant was mentioned in the Bible is during the reign of King Josiah (2 Chronicles 35:3), who lived at Jerusalem several hundred years after the ark was first placed inside Solomon’s temple. Not long after King Josiah’s reign, the Babylonians, in 586 B.C., attacked Jerusalem, destroyed the temple, and carried off many objects that were located in the temple (see 2 Kings 24:13; 2 Kings 25:13-18; 2 Chronicles 36:18-19; Jeremiah 52:17-23). Strangely enough however, of all the items that the Bible lists as being removed from Solomon’s temple during this conquest, the most sacred and valuable of all Israelite objects—the ark of the covenant—is not among them.

This has led many scholars to believe that the ark was removed from Solomon’s temple and hidden somewhere prior to this Babylonian conquest. Where the ark was taken exactly

²¹ JST Deuteronomy 10:1-5; Exodus 25:21. See also, Brant, “What was the ark of the covenant, and does it exist in any form today?” *New Era*, May 1973.

has been somewhat of a mystery and the theories are many. Some believe that the Prophet Jeremiah hid the ark, possibly in a cave at Mount Nebo prior to the Babylonians siege of Jerusalem.²² Others believe that the ark was hidden by the priests during the Babylonian siege in one of the many underground catacombs located below the Jerusalem temple mound.²³ Others yet believe, from Ethiopian official historical records and other sources, that the ark of the covenant, along with the tables of stone which were placed in it, were secretly taken to Ethiopia by one of Solomon's descendants, where it has been closely guarded for nearly 3,000 years beneath the Church of Zion of Mary, and where it still remains even today.²⁴

While we are unsure of the present location of the ark, there is an exciting possibility that the ark may one day be brought

²² This theory originates from the apocryphal record of 2 Maccabees 2.

²³ Once these underground tunnels and catacombs were discovered by Israeli archeologists following the 1967 Arab-Israeli war, "Muslim authorities," according to Jeffery, "furiously demanded that this newly discovered [underground tunnel area] be immediately sealed, and the Israeli government agreed to limit the archeological digging for the moment. Several of the individuals who entered this tunnel, including Rabbi Getz, the rabbi of the Western Wall, declared later that they had seen, at a distance, some of the golden Temple objects. However, they were not able to closely examine these objects" (Jeffery, *Armageddon: Appointment with Destiny*, p. 131).

²⁴ Jeffery, *Armageddon: Appointment with Destiny*, p. 140-47. According to a 1935 article in the Jewish magazine *B'nai B'rith Messenger*, "The Tablets of the Law received by Moses on Mount Sinai and the Ark of the Covenant, [are] both said to have been brought to Ethiopia from Jerusalem by Menelik, the son of King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba" (Neumark, "Lights of New York" *B'nai B'rith Messenger* August 9, 1935).

forth in connection with the rebuilding of the Jerusalem temple. According to Jeremiah:

In [the last] days, saith the Lord, they shall say no more, The ark of the covenant of the Lord: neither shall it come to mind: neither shall they remember it; neither shall they visit it; neither shall that be done any more. At that time they shall call Jerusalem the throne of the Lord (Jeremiah 3:16-17).

Biblical scholar Grant R. Jeffery said of these verses:

In other words, Jeremiah prophesied that once the Battle of Armageddon is over and the millennial kingdom has commenced Israel will stop talking about the Ark, they will stop thinking about the Ark, and they will stop visiting the Ark. The reason the Ark of the Covenant will no longer be important to Israel is that Jesus Christ will be present to be worshiped directly as their Messiah-King.

However, consider the fact that the Jews have not publicly talked about, thought about, or visited the Ark of the Covenant for almost three thousand years since it disappeared.... This prophecy of Jeremiah 3:16-17 does not make sense unless the lost Ark of the Covenant will be rediscovered and unless, in the years leading up to Israel's final great crisis, the Ark will play a pivotal role in the spiritual life of the nation....

The return of the Ark of the Covenant to the Holy of Holies of a rebuilt Temple would signal for Israel the final ushering in of the long-awaited messianic era.²⁵

While we are unable to say for certain that the ark of the covenant will be brought forth at some future point in time, one thing we do know is that the Jewish temple will be rebuilt in its original location, and once this occurs, Jerusalem will begin to prosper.

Gog Sets His Sights on Jerusalem

As Jerusalem begins to prosper, its wealth and beauty will attract the attention of Gog and his army. Ezekiel prophesied:

Thus saith the Lord GOD...thou [Gog] shalt think an evil thought; And thou shalt say, I will go up to the land of unwalled villages [of Jerusalem]; I will go to them that are at rest, that dwell safely...To take a spoil, and to take a prey...to carry away silver and gold, to take away cattle and good, to take a great spoil (Ezekiel 38:10-13).

Referring to this scripture, Elder Charles W. Penrose said:

The bankrupt nations, envying the wealth of the sons of Judah, will seek a pretext to make war upon them, and will invade the 'holy land' to 'take a prey and a spoil.'²⁶

Wilford Woodruff stated that:

²⁵ Jeffery, *Armageddon: Appointment with Destiny*, p. 153.

²⁶ "The Second Advent," *Millennial Star*, 10 Sept. 1859, 21:582-83.

Fleeing Jews [will] take back their gold and silver to Jerusalem and rebuild their city and temple, and they will do this as the Lord lives. Then the Gentiles will say, “Come let us go up to Jerusalem; let us go up and spoil her. The Jews have taken our gold and silver from the nations of the earth—come let us go up and fight against Jerusalem.”²⁷

With that, Gog and his army Magog will prepare to go “against Jerusalem to battle” (Zechariah 14:2).²⁸ Ezekiel describes the scene that follows:

Thou [Gog] shalt ascend and come like a storm, thou shalt be like a cloud to cover the land, thou, and all thy bands, and many people with thee.... And thou shalt come up against my people of Israel, as a cloud to cover the land; it shall be in the latter days, and I will bring thee against my land...O Gog (Ezekiel 38:9, 16).

On their way to Jerusalem, we are told that Gog and his army will assemble in the valley of Megiddo,²⁹ a valley located north of Jerusalem. This valley of Megiddo is the valley from which the term *Armageddon* derives its name.³⁰ According to Brandt:

Historically, Megiddo represented the key fortification that any invader must capture and hold, if they wished

²⁷ *Journal of Discourses*, 22:173.

²⁸ See also Joel 3:1; Zechariah 12:1-2.

²⁹ *Journal of Discourses*, 7:189.

³⁰ *Old Testament Student Manual*, 2:291.

to make their way south to lay siege to or capture Jerusalem and the surrounding area.³¹

And thus, the famous battle of Armageddon begins, as Gog and Magog make their way to Jerusalem to attack the city.

Peace Treaty with Israel Violated

It should be noted that the prophet Daniel predicted that some 3 ½ years before this attack, Gog will have entered into a “covenant” or peace treaty with the Jews at Jerusalem (Daniel 9:27). This peace treaty was originally supposed to have lasted for seven years (see Daniel 9:27³²); however, Daniel says that “in the midst” of this peace treaty (Daniel 9:27), or 3 ½ years into it, Gog will change his mind, break his oath, and command his army to attack Jerusalem.

When this occurs, Zechariah tells us that Gog and his army will invade and take half of Jerusalem. We read:

the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity (Zechariah 14:2).

We also learn from Zechariah that two-thirds of the Jews living in Jerusalem will be slain. He said that “in all the land,

³¹ Brandt, *The Book of Revelation—Things Which Must Shortly Come to Pass*, p. 203.

³² The time period in which Daniel here refers (one week) should be interpreted as seven years, not seven days. The Hebrew word for *weeks* (*sheva*) should be interpreted as “seven.” Thus, in this context, the *week* that Daniel refers to has reference to a seven-year period, not a seven-day period.

saith the Lord, two parts therein shall be cut off and die; but the third shall be left therein” (Zechariah 13:8).

As Gog and his army make their way through the city, they will be determined to take possession of the Jewish temple. According to Smith:

The battle will progressively move towards Jerusalem and the “mountain of the Lord’s house,” or in other words...to the temple of the Lord... The battle must come to the house of the Lord, for if [Satan and his followers] are to have dominion over the earth, they must destroy the seat, or resting place, of their foe, the Lord.³³

Once they reach the temple, we are told that either Gog, or someone from his army, will set up an idol in the Holy Place of the Jewish temple. The scriptures call this event “the abomination of desolation” (Mark 13:14), or “the abomination that maketh desolate” (Daniel 12:11).³⁴

To understand this “abomination of desolation,” we need to understand that an event very similar to this has already occurred once at the temple at Jerusalem. In B.C. 167, the Greek king Antiochus IV Epiphanes invaded Jerusalem, captured the city, and placed a statue of Zeus in the Jewish

³³ Smith, *The Book of Revelation - Plain, Pure, and Simple*, p. 182

³⁴ It should be noted that in addition to this interpretation, the LDS *Bible Dictionary* states, “In a general sense, abomination of desolation also describes the latter-day judgments to be poured out upon the wicked wherever they may be” (*Bible Dictionary*, p. 601, under “Abomination of Desolation”).

temple.³⁵ Jesus tells us that a similar thing will happen again in the latter days:

And *again* shall the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, be fulfilled (Joseph Smith—Matthew 1:32; emphasis added).

Daniel described this future event as follows:

and they [Magog] shall pollute the sanctuary of strength...and they shall place [in the temple] the abomination that maketh desolate (Daniel 11:31).³⁶

LDS scholar Stephen E. Robinson wrote briefly about this event:

In Daniel, the abomination of desolation is that thing so hateful to God that its presence in the temple causes the divine presence to depart, leaving the sanctuary desolate.³⁷

The Apostle Paul also penned something in one of his epistles that has led many scholars to believe that the idol which will be placed in the Holy Place of the Jewish temple during this struggle will be an idol made in the image of Gog. Paul stated that just prior to Christ's coming, a "man of sin" (2 Thessalonians 2:3) would "exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; *so that he as God sitteth in*

³⁵ Price, *Rose Guide to the Temple*, p. 63.

³⁶ See also Daniel 9:27; Daniel 12:11.

³⁷ Robinson, "Nephi's 'Great and Abominable Church'" *FARMS*, 1998, p. 32. Robinson, continued, "In the Old Testament, the terms translated into English as abominable or abomination are usually associated with idolatrous worship or gross sexual immortality ("Nephi's 'Great and Abominable Church'" *FARMS*, 1998, p. 32).

the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God” (2 Thessalonians 2:4).³⁸

Whether or not this idol will be in the image of Gog or not remains to be seen; however, one thing we do know is that once Gog has desecrated the Jewish temple with idolatry, his next item of business is to put an end to all of the animal sacrifices that were previously restored at the temple by the Levite priests. Daniel stated that Gog “shall take away the daily sacrifice” (Daniel 11:31), and “he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease” (Daniel 9:27).

These two important events, the idol set up in the Holy Place, and Gog putting an end to animal sacrifice, mark the beginning of a very critical 3 ½ year time period for the Jews. Daniel stated that “from the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days [or 3 ½ years]” of tribulation (Daniel 12:11). John the Revelator echoed this timeline as well, stating that “the holy city shall they [the Gentiles] tread under foot forty and two months [or 3 ½ years]” (Revelation 11:2).

As terrible as this may seem for the Jews, the Lord revealed to the prophet Zechariah that this tragedy will “refine them as silver” (Zechariah 13:9). The Lord said that as a result, the Jews “shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people: and they shall say, The Lord is my God” (Zechariah 13:9).

³⁸ For more information regarding the desecration of this Jewish temple, see Parry and Parry, *Understanding the Signs of the Times*, p. 268; McConkie, *The Millennial Messiah*, p. 474; Skousen, *His Return*, p. 225.

The Lord Defends Israel

With Gog in command of such a powerful army, one might ask why he was only able to take “half of the city” (Zechariah 14:2) during this 3 ½ year period, as opposed to capturing the entire city of Jerusalem. The answer comes to us from the prophet Zechariah, who said:

In that day shall the Lord defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem (Zechariah 13:8).³⁹

For the next 3 ½ years, we are told that the Lord will protect his people by sending them “two prophets [who] are to be raised up to the Jewish nation in the last days” (D&C 77:15). Isaiah tells us that these two prophets will be “full of the fury of the Lord” (Isaiah 51:20).⁴⁰ They will singlehandedly, for the next 3 ½ years, prevent Gog and Magog from taking the entire city of Jerusalem, and we are told that they will do so by the power of God. The Lord said to the Apostle John:

And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days [or 3 ½ years].... And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies: and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed. These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy: and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will (Revelation 11:3-6).

³⁹ Ezekiel also prophesied that the Jews at Jerusalem “shall dwell safely all of them” (Ezekiel 38:8; see also Ezekiel 38:14).

⁴⁰ See also Ezekiel 38:18.

Of these two prophets, Elder Bruce R. McConkie has said:

They shall have power like Elijah who called down fire from heaven to consume his enemies, and who sealed the heavens that it rained not in all Israel for the space of three and a half years, and like Moses by whose word blood and plagues lay heavily upon the Egyptians.⁴¹

Elder McConkie also added:

And these two shall be followers of that humble man Joseph Smith, through whom the Lord of Heaven restored the fulness of his everlasting gospel in this final dispensation of grace. No doubt they will be members of the Council of the Twelve or of the First Presidency of the Church.⁴²

This statement helps to explain why these two prophets will have such power, for if these two prophets are indeed members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, then we can safely assume that they will have also been sealed in their foreheads prior to this time. As a result of this seal, these two prophets will have the same protection from God that many of the Saints living in Zion will have. As discussed in chapter 9, this sealing protection is how the righteous are protected from the seven plagues poured out by the seven angels, and the very reason why Zion will be so terrible for her enemies to fight against.

⁴¹ McConkie, *Doctrinal New Testament Commentary*, 3:510.

⁴² McConkie, *Doctrinal New Testament Commentary*, 3:509.

At the end of this 3 ½ year period, however, the Lord will allow these two prophets to be killed. John the Revelator said:

And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them. And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city...where also our Lord was crucified (Revelation 11:7-8).⁴³

When this occurs, Gog and his army will celebrate their hard-fought victory. John describes their reaction to the death of these two prophets as follows:

And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another; because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth (Revelation 11:10).

After these two prophets have been killed, Gog and his army will prevent anyone from giving them a proper burial. Instead, they will allow their dead bodies lie in the streets for 3 ½ days. John records:

And they of the people and kindreds and tongues and nations shall see their dead bodies three days and an half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves (Revelation 11:9).

Just as soon as Gog and Magog proceed to take the remainder of the city, we are told that these two prophets will be

⁴³ See also Isaiah 51:19-20.

resurrected and will ascend into heaven. John described this event as follows:

And after three days and an half the Spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon them which saw them. And they heard a great voice from heaven saying unto them, Come up hither. And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud; and their enemies beheld them (Revelation 11:11-12).

Elder Parley P. Pratt summarized these events as follows:

After the city and temple are rebuilt by the Jews, the Gentiles will tread it under foot forty and two months [or 3 ½ years], during which time there will be two prophets continually prophesying and working mighty miracles. And it seems that the Gentile army shall be hindered from utterly destroying and overthrowing the city, while these two prophets continue. But, after a struggle of three years and a half, they will at length succeed in destroying these two prophets and then overrunning much of the city; they will send gifts to each other because of the death of the two prophets, and in the meantime will not allow their dead bodies to be put in graves, but suffer them to lie in the streets of Jerusalem three days and a half, during which time the armies of the Gentiles, consisting of many kindreds, tongues and nations, passing through the city, plundering the Jews, will see their dead bodies lying in the street. But after three days and a half, on a sudden, the spirit of life from God will enter them; they will arise and stand upon their feet, and great fear

will fall upon them that see them. And then they shall hear a voice from heaven saying, ‘Come up hither,’ and they will ascend up to heaven in a cloud, with enemies beholding them...then comes the shaking spoken of by Ezekiel, and the rending of the Mount of Olives spoken of by Zechariah.⁴⁴

As Elder Pratt here references, once the two prophets have been raised up and have ascended into heaven, Christ will descend and set his foot upon the Mount of Olives. Zechariah prophesied:

Then shall the Lord go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle. And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east (Zechariah 14:3-4).⁴⁵

We are told that this event will cause a great earthquake, which will cause the Mount of Olives to split in two. Zechariah prophesied that “the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south” (Zechariah 14:4).⁴⁶

When this occurs, Zechariah informs us that the Jews will “flee” from the army of Gog “to the valley of the mountains” (Zechariah 14:5).

⁴⁴ Pratt, *Voice of Warning*, p. 33.

⁴⁵ See also D&C 45:48.

⁴⁶ See also D&C 45:48; Ezekiel 38:19.

As the Jews flee to safety around this Messiah who has come to save them, the Lord says:

And then shall the Jews look upon me and say: What are these wounds in thine hands and in thy feet? Then shall they know that I am the Lord; for I will say unto them: These wounds are the wounds with which I was wounded in the house of my friends. I am he who was lifted up. I am Jesus that was crucified. I am the Son of God. And then shall they weep because of their iniquities; then shall they lament because they persecuted their king (D&C 45:51-53).⁴⁷

This sacred event will convert the entire Jewish nation to the gospel of Jesus Christ:

So the house of Israel shall know that I am the Lord their God from that day and forward (Ezekiel 39:22).

Magog Destroyed by Fire

Meanwhile, once the Jews have gathered around the Savior in safety, the Lord says, “And I will send a fire on Magog” (Ezekiel 39:6). On a second occasion, the Lord said, “I will rain upon [Gog], and upon his bands, and upon the many people that are with him, an overflowing rain, and great hailstones, fire, and brimstone” (Ezekiel 38:22).

Ezekiel tells us that this fire and brimstone will destroy 5/6th of Gog’s entire army (see Ezekiel 39:2). And as for Gog, the

⁴⁷ See also Zechariah 13:6; Zechariah 12:10-11.

Lord says, “I will give unto Gog a place there of [in the] graves in Israel” (Ezekiel 39:11).

The prophet Zechariah also spoke of the fate of those who will have fought against Jerusalem. He said:

And this shall be the plague wherewith the Lord will smite all the people that have fought against Jerusalem; Their flesh shall consume away while they stand upon their feet, and their eyes shall consume away in their holes, and their tongue shall consume away in their mouth (Zechariah 14:12).

Furthermore, the Lord said in Ezekiel:

I will give thee [Gog and Magog] unto the ravenous birds of every sort, and to the beasts of the field to be devoured. Thou shalt fall upon the open field: for I have spoken it, saith the Lord God (Ezekiel 39:4-5).⁴⁸

The Lord has said that this destruction will be so great that it will take Israel seven months just to bury Gog and his army of fallen soldiers. We read in Ezekiel:

And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will give unto Gog a place there of graves in Israel... and there shall they bury Gog and all his multitude... And seven months shall the house of Israel be burying of them, that they may cleanse the land (Ezekiel 39:11-12).

A Triumphal Entry

⁴⁸ See also Joel 2:20.

After the army of Gog has been destroyed, the Jews will then lead Jesus back to the Jerusalem temple to honor him as their Savior (see Ezekiel 44:1-2), at which time “then shall the sanctuary be cleansed” by the Lord (Daniel 8:14). As a result of this cleansing, Ezekiel saw that “the glory of the LORD filled the house of the LORD” (Ezekiel 44:4).

In connection with this cleansing process, and perhaps as a result of the earthquake mentioned previously, we are told that a river of water shall also proceed forth from underneath the temple (see Joel 3:8; Ezekiel 47:1-2; Zechariah 13:1; Ezekiel 47:1-12),⁴⁹ which is another sign that this temple has been accepted by the Lord once more.

Once the temple has been cleansed, and once the Jews have been purified and are converted to the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Doctrine and Covenants tells us that the “sons of Levi” will “offer again an offering unto the Lord in righteousness” (D&C 13:1).⁵⁰ Of this offering, the Prophet Joseph Smith said:

It is generally supposed that [animal] sacrifice was entirely done away when...the Lord Jesus was offered up, and that there will be no necessity for the ordinance of sacrifice in the future; but those who assert this are certainly not acquainted with the duties, privileges and authority of the Priesthood, or with the Prophets....

These [animal] sacrifices, as well as every ordinance belonging to the Priesthood, will, when the Temple of

⁴⁹ See also, Smith, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, p. 286.

⁵⁰ See also Malachi 3:3.

the Lord shall be built [in Jerusalem], and the sons of Levi be purified, be fully restored...else how can the restitution of all things spoken of by the Holy Prophets be brought to pass? It is not to be understood that the law of Moses will be established again with all its rites and variety of ceremonies; this has never been spoken of by the prophets; but those things which existed prior to Moses' day, namely, sacrifice, will be continued.⁵¹

Thus, after the Lord has purified the sons of Levi, He will instruct them to again offer animal sacrifices upon the altar of the temple, and they will do so “in righteousness” (D&C 13:1).⁵² This means that they will do so worthily, and according to the Prophet Joseph Smith, under direction of the priesthood.⁵³

However, we are told that soon after the Levites have offered up their sacrifices “unto the Lord in righteousness” (D&C 13:1), the Lord will no longer require blood sacrifices from their hands. President Joseph Fielding Smith explained:

The sacrifice of animals will be done to complete the restoration when the temple spoken of is built; at the beginning of the millennium, or in the restoration,

⁵¹ *History of the Church*, pp. 211-12. President Joseph Fielding Smith added: “The law of sacrifice will have to be restored.... It will be necessary, therefore, for the sons of Levi, who offered the blood sacrifices anciently in Israel, to offer such a sacrifice again to round out and complete this ordinance in this dispensation. Sacrifice by the shedding of blood was instituted in the days of Adam and of necessity will have to be restored” (Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, 3:94).

⁵² See also Malachi 3:3.

⁵³ Smith, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, p. 172.

blood sacrifices will be performed long enough to complete the fulness of the restoration in this dispensation. Afterwards sacrifice will be of some other character.⁵⁴

After Armageddon

At some point after these events have transpired, a new temple, as seen by the prophet Ezekiel (see Ezekiel 40-43), will be built in Jerusalem. This temple, however, will not be used for animal sacrifices under the Law of Moses, but will be used for the higher ordinances of the priesthood. President Joseph Fielding Smith explained:

Ezekiel predicted the building of a temple in Jerusalem *which will be used for ordinance work* after the gathering of Israel from their long dispersion and when they are cleansed from their transgressions.⁵⁵

Once Jerusalem has been converted, word will spread to the surrounding nations that the Lord again dwells with his people. As a result, we are told that many nations surrounding Jerusalem will also become converted to the gospel of Jesus Christ. Zechariah prophesied:

Yea, many people and strong nations shall come to seek the Lord of hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray before the Lord. Thus saith the Lord of hosts; In those days it

⁵⁴ Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, 3:94.

⁵⁵ Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, 2:244; emphasis added. It should be mentioned that the temple as seen by Ezekiel (see Ezekiel 40-43) is not the same structure as the rebuilt Temple of Solomon. The temple that Ezekiel described is much larger than the Temple of Solomon was, and much too large to fit on the temple mount. This tells us that Ezekiel's temple will be a separate temple structure all together.

shall come to pass, that ten men... shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you: for we have heard that God is with you (Zechariah 8:22-23).⁵⁶

No Rainbow in the Heavens

As mankind gets closer and closer to the Second Coming of Christ, we should mention that for one year, the year leading up to the Savior's final return in the clouds of heaven, there will be no rainbows found in the skies. Joseph Smith said:

I have asked of the Lord concerning His coming; and while asking the Lord, He gave a sign and said, "In the days of Noah I set a bow in the heavens as a sign and token that in any year that the bow should be seen the Lord would not come; but there should be seed time and harvest during that year: but whenever you see the bow withdrawn, it shall be a token that there shall be famine, pestilence, and great distress among the nations, and that the coming of the Messiah is not far distant."⁵⁷

No doubt this information has been given to us by the Lord so that we may know when his Second Coming is nigh.

As we thus approach the Second Coming, the seventh and final angel will sound his trump. John records:

⁵⁶ See also D&C45:54; Zechariah 14:16; Ezekiel 38:23; Ezekiel 39:7, 21; Isaiah 19:20-23.

⁵⁷ Smith, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, pp. 340-41. See also Smith, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, p. 305; Genesis 9:9-17.

And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever (Revelation 11:15).

As we shall see in the next chapter, sometime after this seventh angel has sounded his trump, the Lord will make his final appearance in the clouds of heaven.

*We hope you enjoyed reading this sample chapter from
Richard Brunson's Before the Second Coming.*

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