



## THE TEMPLE IN JEWISH THOUGHT

"The hope to see the rebuilding of the Holy Temple was born the very day it was destroyed...During 2,000 years of exile, the people of Israel did not forget the Holy Temple. They believed with perfect faith in the prophecies which promised that it would be rebuilt. During the times of their greatest joy, such as a wedding ceremony, they recall the Temple by breaking a glass, symbolizing the destruction...When the seder of Passover is concluded, it is with the words, 'Next Year in the Rebuilt Jerusalem.' The concluding prayers of the Day of Atonement end with this same clarion call. These words express so succinctly the Jewish people's yearning and desire to return to the hallowed courtyards of the Temple to celebrate these festivals and holy days."

(From the guide book of the Temple Institute Exhibition, page 31)

*"The Lord hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee (Israel) with an everlasting love; therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee."*

*(Jeremiah 31:3)*

## A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE TEMPLE

### The First Temple

(Solomon's Temple) was

- Dedicated in 950 B.C.
- Destroyed by the Babylonians in 586 B.C.

### The Second Temple

(Zerubbabel's Temple) was

- Dedicated in 515 B.C.
- Expanded by Herod the Great, starting in 20 B.C. and continuing until 64 A.D. (John 2:20)
- Destroyed by the Romans in 70 A.D.

### The Third Temple is

- Indicated in prophetic Scripture (Matthew 24:1-3, 15-22, 29-31; Daniel 9:20-27)
- Expected in current Jewish thought (though not universally)
- Complicated by the political tensions associated with the Dome of the Rock (third holiest Muslim site built 685-705 A.D.) occupying the spot on which the first and second temples stood.

## THREE THINGS YOU'RE LIKELY TO FIND IN A JEWISH HOME IN THE MONTH OF DECEMBER (When Hanukkah Is Celebrated)

1. The eight-branch candle stand (called the **Hannukiah**) containing a ninth candle from which the others are cumulatively lit on the eight successive evenings of the holiday.

2. The **draydel**, a four-sided spinning top which is used to play a children's game. Each of the sides has the first letter of one of four Hebrew words forming the phrase translated, "A great miracle happened there," referring to the historical events occurring in 165 B.C. of which Hannukah is a commemoration.

3. **Latkes**, potato pancakes fried in oil and served with sour cream and applesauce as a traditional Hanukkah treat, as are doughnuts. Foods cooked in oil evoke the memory of the supernatural extension of one day's supply of oil to last eight days in lighting the Temple in Jerusalem.

### DID YOU KNOW...

- That the fringe on the **tallit**, the prayer-shawl worn by Jewish people during morning prayers, consists of 613 separate strings representing the 613 separate commandments of the Torah (Law of Moses)?
- That forty per cent of the 613 commandments can only be obeyed

when there is a Temple in which Jews can worship?

- That it is now possible to E-mail a prayer request to a **yeshiva** (religious school) in Jerusalem and someone will print the request on a piece of paper and slip it into a crack in the "Wailing Wall" (Western Wall)?

### SIGNIFICANT NUMBERS

Of the 5,750,000 Jews in the U.S.:

- only 10% attend synagogue on a given Sabbath.
- 70% attend only 4 times a year.
- 11% are Orthodox.
- 30% are Reform.
- 40% are Conservative.
- about 30% are married to Gentiles.

(David M. Levy, "The American Jew: Stranger in Our Midst," in *Israel My Glory*, Oct./Nov. 1991, 11 ff., as cited by David Larsen, *Jews, Gentiles, & the Church*, p. 219.)



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