

Chapter 18

Arrival of a Bird of Prey from the East and the construction of the Holy Temple in Jerusalem

The holy Jerusalem Temple was first constructed by the great scholar King Solomon. In II Kings 25:8-10, we read that the great temple was destroyed by the Babylonian King Nebukednesar. We observe in Isaiah 44: 28 and 45: 3 that God summons Cyrus by name who was a Persian king. We can see the mission of Cyrus in Isaiah 44:28, was the reconstruction of the city of Jerusalem and the holy Temple of God.

In II Chronicle 36:22-23 we see the royal proclamation of king Cyrus throughout his realm.

“ This is what Cyrus king of Persia says: ‘ The Lord, the God of Heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth and he has appointed me to build a temple for him at Jerusalem in Judah. Anyone of his people among you- may the Lord his God be with him and let him go up’ “.

During the period of the Persian king Cyrus, according to his order, Zerubbabel, the son of Shealtiel and the ruler of Judah, and Jeshua, the son of Josadak and his brothers and the rest of their brothers (the priests and the Levites and all who had returned from the captivity to Jerusalem) together started the work of the House of God[Ezra 3:78]

But the construction work had stopped for some time[Ezra 4]. We can see in Ezra 5:1 that prophet Haggai and Zechariah, a descendant of Iddho, prophecised to the Jews in Judah and Jerusalem in the name of God of Israel, and as a result, Zerrubbabel, son of Shealtiel and Jeshua, son of Jozadak started the work to rebuild the Temple of God in Jerusalem.

We can see the prophecies of prophet Haggai to the Jews in Judah and Jerusalem in Haggai 2:4-7 and 2: 20-23. It is as follows.

“ But now be strong, O Zerubbabel, declares the Lord, ‘ Be strong, O Jeshua, son of Jehozadak, the high priest. Be strong, all you people of the land, declares the Lord, and work. ,For I am with you, declares the Lord almighty. This is what I covenanted with you when you came out of Egypt. And my spirit remains among you. Do not fear”.

This is what the Lord almighty says:

“In a little while, I will once more shake the heavens and the earth, the sea and the dry land. I will overthrow all the nations and their treasures will be brought here and the temple will be filled with wealth.” (Haggai 2: 4-7)

“ Then the word of the Lord came to me:’ The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this temple; his hands will also complete it. Then you will know that the Lord almighty has sent me to you.’ (Zechariah 4:9)

We see in Ezra 6:15 that the Holy Temple was completed on the third day of the month Adar, in the sixth year of the reign of King Darius.

We read in new testament that the life of Christ is closely related to this holy temple. He used to preach in this temple.

But fulfilling the prophecy of Christ, (“ ‘Do you see all these great buildings?’ , replied Jesus. ‘ Not one stone here will be left on another, every one will be thrown down”.

St. Mark 13:2), the Roman force in AD 70 conquered Jerusalem and demolished the Holy Temple of God.

If we think of the prophecy of prophet Haggai, we may feel that the prophecy didn't fulfill as the said great day of wrath, frightening the sky, earth , the sea , didn't come during the period of the above temple of God.

In order to understand the real fact, we should go across the book of prophet Isaiah.

We have seen the mission of Cyrus given by God in Isaiah 44: 28 and 45:3. If we read Isaiah 46:11-13, we see that God will invoke a male from the east called the bird of prey.

“ From the east, I summon a bird of prey; from a far-off land, a man to fulfill my purpose. What I have said, that I will bring about; what I have planned, that I will do I will grant salvation to Zion, my splendour to Israel”.

[‘A man to fulfill my purpose’ means that male will receive circumcision from the Jews.]

But we didn't see in any part of the Bible , that this prophecy has been fulfilled. Because in Bible, it is not recorded that the arrival of such a male from the foreign land(east) to Jerusalem. It is a prophecy yet to be completed and a riddle-like one. In Isaiah 46:13 , we can see that Israel become glorified by the fulfillment of this prophecy.

Prophet Isaiah didn't say anything about the mission of that male from the foreign land called bird of prey. Then what can be the mission of that foreigner in Jerusalem who is not a Jew?.

Clearly , to lay the foundation of God's Temple , lead the construction of God's sanctuary there and build the holy city are the missions of that foreigner. Because the glory of Israel is not complete or perfect in the absence of the Temple of God in Jerusalem. We have already seen that the Israel will be glorified after the arrival of the male called 'Bird of Prey' from the east in Jerusalem.

Jeremiah 31: 37-39 prophesied about the boundaries of the holy city. Jeremiah 31:37-39

“ This is what the Lord says:’ Only if the heavens above can be measured and the foundations of the earth below be searched out, will I reject all the descendants of Israel because of all they have done’ , declares the Lord.”.

“ The days are coming, ‘ Declares the Lord’, ‘ when this city will be rebuilt for me from the Tower of Hanael to the Corner Gate. The measuring line will stretch from the straight to the hill of Gareb and then turn to Goah. The whole valley, where dead bodies and ashes were thrown,

and all the terraces out to the Kidron valley on the east as far as the corner of the Horse Gate will be holy to the Lord. The city will never again be uprooted or demolished.”.

Two evidences are available from Bible that the Jerusalem temple forever will be rebuilt before Lord’s great day of wrath. The first evidence we can see in Isaiah 66:6.

“ Hear that uproar from the city, hear that noise from the temple! It is the sound of the Lord repaying his enemies all they deserve.”

The second proof is available from the book of Malachi 1:2-3.

“ See, I will send my messenger, who will prepare the way before me. Then suddenly the Lord you are seeking will come to his temple; the messenger of the covenant, whom you desire, will come”; says the Lord Almighty. But who can endure the day of his coming?. Who can stand when he appears?.

We can understand from Zechariah 12:10 that on that great day of wrath, Christ will appear before the Jews showing his wounds of sphere and nails. Zechariah proceeds his prophecy that the Jews will mourn for the big sin their ancestors committed. Zechariah 12:10 “ they will look on me, the one they have pierced and they will mourn for him as one mourns for an only child, and grieve bitterly for him as one grieves for a firstborn

Son”. Malachi 3:3 says about the refinement of Levites by Christ who enters the Jerusalem church. Malachi 3:3 “ He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; he will purify the Levites and refine them like gold and silver”. In all these prophecies, the reference of the Jerusalem church made forever is highly noticeable.

The description of details of the model and structure of the Jerusalem holy Temple made forever can be seen in the chapters 40-44 in the Book of Ezekiel.

In Ezekiel 44:11, we can see the command of God that the burnt offerings and sacrifices should be performed in the said Jerusalem Temple.

In Psalm 40, we can see the prayer of a stranger from a far off land. It is a prophecy yet to be fulfilled. In that prophecy, “ The Great Assembly” denotes Israel Parliament because the male from the far off land has to address the Israel parliament.

We see the ban or prohibition of God, “ This is what the sovereign Lord says; ‘ No foreigner uncircumcised in heart and flesh is to enter my sanctuary, not even the foreigner who lives among the Israelites”. (Ezekiel 44:9).

From the above Holy Words, we can understand very good ideas. The urge of Christians for conversion is meaningless. The glory of Christian religion is not more than any other religion’s which are also the other sheep pens of Christ. Because, after the construction of the Jerusalem church made for ever, Christians and Hindus will have to wait outside the temple standing shoulder to shoulder.