



The End of Days: Fundamentalism and the Struggle for the Temple Mount

By Gershom Gorenberg

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In this provocative work, seasoned journalist Gershom Gorenberg portrays a deadly mix of religious extremism, violence, and Mideast politics, as expressed in the struggle for the sacred center of Jerusalem. Known to Jews and Christians as the Temple Mount and to Muslims as the Noble Sanctuary, this thirty-five-acre enclosure at the southeast corner of Jerusalem's Old City is the most contested piece of real estate on earth. Here nationalism combines with fundamentalist faith in a volatile brew. Members of the world's three major monotheistic faiths--Judaism, Christianity, and Islam--hold this spot to be the key to salvation as they await the end of the world, and struggle to fulfill conflicting religious prophecies with dangerous political consequences. Adroitly portraying American radio evangelists of the End, radical Palestinian sheikhs, and Israeli ex-terrorists, Gorenberg explains why believers hope for the End, and why prominent American fundamentalists provide hard-line support for Israel while looking forward to the apocalypse. He makes sense of the messianic fervor that has driven some Israeli settlers to oppose peace. And he describes the Islamic apocalyptic visions that cast Israel's actions in Jerusalem as diabolic plots. *The End of Days* shows how conflict over Jerusalem and the fiery belief in apocalypse continue to have a potent impact on world politics and why a lasting peace in the Middle East continues to prove elusive.

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

For the average American watching CNN, the conflict in the Middle East is a complicated affair, mired in an ancient past and an uncertain future. It also seems like a distant story, one that only remotely touches upon the temples and churches beyond the Middle East. Not so, explains Gershom Gorenberg, a senior editor at the *Jerusalem Report*. In fact, the threat of apocalyptic religious violence is happening now, and it's happening everywhere. It is fueled in part, he says, by Christian leaders in America's fundamentalist churches.

To help readers make sense of it all, Gorenberg centers his fascinating discussion around the Temple Mount, the world's most desired piece of religious real estate. It is where King David erected an altar, where Solomon and Herod built their temples, and where the Dome of Rock now stands. (Cain even murdered Abel, according to ancient legend, over who would own this place.) The Christian far right now stakes a future claim to the Temple Mount, where they predict (or at least hope) the "Third Temple" will be built shortly. Gorenberg offers the impressive research of a seasoned investigative journalist, yet he possesses the narrative skills of a novelist. The result is an enthralling and informative read. --*Gail Hudson*

From Publishers Weekly

Although Gorenberg, an Israeli journalist, does not specifically address the recent violence at Temple Mount/Al-Haram al-Sharif in Jerusalem, anyone who seeks to understand the root of the fighting will find his thorough history of those 35 disputed acres to be indispensable. Gorenberg makes a stellar contribution to comprehending the troubled relationships among Arabs, Jews and Christians in Israel, meticulously analyzing the actions and beliefs of fundamentalist groups in all three religions. Jewish messianists and Christian millennialists insist that building the Third Temple on the site where both Solomon's and Herod's temples stood is essential for the advent of the Messiah, while Muslim apocalyptic believers fear that efforts to destroy Al-Aqsa mosque to make way for the Third Temple will prevent fulfillment of the prophecy about Islam's Meccan shrine migrating to Jerusalem at the end of time. Gorenberg writes objectively about advocates of each stance, slipping just once when he rejects the title of "martyr" for Baruch Goldstein (1994 killer of 29 Arabs in the Tomb of Patriarchs), calling that label "obscene." Gorenberg's prescience is manifest by his calling Temple Mount "a sacred blasting cap" and by stating that "any incident at the site can spin out of control." This valuable study greatly enhances readers grasp of the Middle East's religious and political complexities. (Dec.)

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Review

"Gorenberg...shows himself an insightful listener."--*The New York Times Book Review*

"Dismayingly good history....Gorenberg's book predicts not only the eruption but the location of each fault line."--*Washington Post Book World*

"A prescient and invaluable guide to understanding the collapse of the peace process and the dangerously

escalating conflict that has replaced it...Gorenberg's vivid descriptions of the setting and his well-crafted development of the characters make this book read like a millennial thriller, leaving the reader with a bone-chilling sensation about the violent events currently unfolding in Jerusalem."--*Boston Globe*

"Gorenberg's prescience is manifest....This valuable study greatly enhances readers' grasp of [the] Middle East's religious and political complexities."--*Publishers Weekly*, starred review

"Few American journalists understand evangelical theology well enough to explain the Christian Right, few Israeli journalists take messianic Zionism seriously enough to explain the right-wing settlers, and few of either investigate Islam as more than a caricature. Gershom Gorenberg has the intellectual depth and journalistic curiosity to do all three, and as a result, his warnings chill the bone."--*The New Republic*

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Hugo Mann:

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