

# Overview of Ezekiel 40-48, Chapters 40-42

September 20: Ezekiel 43-45

September 27: Ezekiel 46-48

Lesson 24

# Date of Ezekiel's Vision (40:1)

- Ezekiel was taken captive in 597 B.C.
- Jerusalem was destroyed in 586 B.C.
- Ezekiel is given this vision in the 25<sup>th</sup> year of his captivity, and 14 years after Jerusalem was destroyed.
  - 572 B.C.

# Introduction to the Vision (40:1-4)

- Where was Ezekiel taken “in the visions of God”?
- “Toward the south was something like the structure of a \_\_\_\_\_”
  - “But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem” (Heb. 12:22).
- Describe the man Ezekiel saw.
- What instructions did this man give Ezekiel?

# Important Observations

- Both the tabernacle and temple were lined with gold, but it's missing from **this temple**.
  - This temple, at least in terms of outward appearance, was not as beautiful as the tabernacle and temple.
  - More emphasis is given to the **size** and **proper use** of each part of the temple.
- The **holiness** of this temple is stressed above anything else.

# Important Observations

- Other things missing from **this temple**, compared to Solomon's.
  - Solomon's: Three pieces of furniture in the holy place—the table of showbread, lampstand, altar of incense. One in the most holy place—ark of covenant.
  - An altar of wood is the only piece of furniture mentioned in **this temple** (41:22).
  - Could this be the **substance**, and not the **shadow**?

# Important Observations

- Dimensions given for greater temple area depict a square, 4500 feet on each side (42:15–20).
  - This area was 4 or 5 times larger than Mount Moriah, upon which the original temple of Solomon was built.
- As to the minute details or specifications of this temple—no explanations are offered, so let's be careful about inventing our own.
- More on this next week, but the real heart of the vision begins in ch. 43 (entrance of God's glory).

# Premillennial View

- The Jews will one day rebuild this temple in Jerusalem, following these specifications.
- Jesus will sit on David's literal throne in Jerusalem and reign there for 1000 years.
- Animal sacrifices, circumcision, feast days, Levitical priesthood—all of these will be restored.
- What problems do you see with all of this?

# Pattern for a Physical Temple?

- Compare Ezekiel 40–48 to Revelation 21–22.
  - “New Jerusalem” with gates of pearl, foundations of precious stones, with its whole appearance that of crystal clear jasper.
  - This city is described as a perfect cube—its length, width, and height all approx. 1500 miles (Rev. 21:6).
  - Nearly everyone understands this is NOT a literal city, built somewhere on the earth.
  - Perfectly understandable, then, that a prophet who has used many symbols would describe God’s spiritual kingdom in terms of a huge, complex temple.

# Pattern for a Physical Temple?

- Consider the symbolic nature of previous visions:
  - David the new king and shepherd (34).
  - The spiritual renewal of Israel (36:16–38).
  - Valley of Dry Bones (ch. 37).
  - God vs. Gog (chs. 38–39).

# Pattern for a Physical Temple?

- Built on a very high mountain (40:2).
  - Doesn't fit Mt. Moriah, but does fit the prophecies of Isa. 2:2; Micah 4:1; Daniel 2:35:
    - “In the latter days...the mountain of the LORD'S house shall be established on the top of the mountains...” (Isa. 2:2; Micah 4:1).
    - “The stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth” (Dan. 2:35).
  - Coincidence? We think NOT.

# Pattern for a Physical Temple?

- No temple was EVER built like this one.
  - NOT the one built by Solomon, because the details were altogether different (1 Kings 6–7).
  - NOT the temple they rebuilt after their return from captivity (Ezra 1–6).
  - NOT the one built by Herod the Great, the one in which Jesus worshiped.
  - Would God let them take liberties with His details? Exodus 25:9; 1 Chronicles 28:11–19.

# Pattern for a Physical Temple?

- 43:10–12.
  - “Describe the temple of the house of Israel, that they may be ashamed of their iniquities...if they are ashamed of all they have done, make known to them the design of the temple and its arrangement” (43:10–11).
  - Ashamed because they defiled God’s house (43:7–9).
  - “This is the **law of the temple**: the whole area surrounding the temple is most holy. Behold, this is the **law of the temple**” (43:12).

# Pattern for a Physical Temple?

- Consider the **river** that flowed from under the threshold of the temple (47:1–12).
  - Ankle deep, then knee deep, then hip deep, and then water that could not be crossed.
  - Trees along either side of the river; everything thrived along the banks and in the river itself.
  - No actual river like that in Jerusalem, nor has there ever been.
  - But, compare 47:12 with Revelation 22:1–2.

# Pattern for a Physical Temple?

- More on this the next two weeks, but consider other elements of this vision given a spiritual application in the N.T.
  - City, temple, God dwelling in the temple, gates, priests, garments, circumcision, inheritance, “law of the temple” (holiness), “My table.”

# Pattern for a Physical Temple?

- Consider the division of the land among the tribes (47–48).
  - Does not match the tribal lines of Joshua's day, when the land was divided among the 12 tribes.
  - There is no record of the land being divided again.
  - Ezekiel's vision depicts the land as a perfect rectangle, each border exactly 25,000 cubits wide.

# The Main Point

Bob Waldron: “The point of this whole incredible vision is that Jehovah was planning to establish a new spiritual realm, with a wonderful, fruitful land in which to live, and with a marvelous temple in which to worship Him. This temple is the spiritual temple, the church (Eph. 2:20–22). The land represents the spiritual realm or relationship in which God’s blessings are given. The priests and the Levites are the holy nation that Christians are, serving the Lord and offering up spiritual sacrifices (1 Pet. 2:5, 9). The river represents the spiritual blessings that flow from His temple and benefit all who come into contact with them.”

## Outline (40-42)

- Descriptions of a wall outside the temple, the three gateways on the north, south, and east sides, and the outer court (40:5–27).
- Ezekiel is then shown the inner court, which has gates and chambers for the priests, and tables for slaughtering animals (40:28–47).

# Outline (40-42)

- The temple itself is described, with its various parts (40:48–41:26).
  - Vestibule, or porch (40:48–49).
  - The holy place (41:1)
  - The most holy place (41:4).
  - Wall of the temple, side-chambers for the priests, various other details (41:5–26).

## Outline (40-42)

- Man with the measuring rod shows Ezekiel the measurements for the greater temple area—including its outer walls, plus a specified portion outside the walls on each side (42:1–20).
  - Chambers for the priests in the outer wall, where they could eat of the holy things, and change into their holy garments for service.