

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

Ezekiel: Effective Ministry To The Spiritually Rebellious

Part LXI: Overviewing The Millennial Temple: A Lesson In God's Holiness

(Ezekiel 40:1-43:27)

I. Introduction

- A. Ezekiel chapters 40-48 predict God's restoration of Israel following His many predictions of judgment on the nation for its sin, and Ezekiel 40:1-43:27 predicts the temple God will establish in the restored Kingdom.
- B. These chapters, filled with details about the future temple, reveal the great holiness of God to the Hebrew people of Ezekiel's day in sharp contrast to the way they had profaned and desecrated His temple in Jerusalem.
- C. We thus take an *overview* of these three chapters on God's great holiness for our insight and edification:

II. Overviewing The Millennial Temple: A Lesson In God's Holiness, Ezekiel 40:1-43:27.

- A. The Lord had promised to set His temple for His sanctified people in their midst in the land in Ezekiel 37:26-28, and Ezekiel 40:1-43:27 describes that new sanctuary, Bible Know. Com., O. T., p. 1303. Three views have been given in identifying this temple, two of which err, and we explain (as follows; *Ibid.*, p. 1303-1304):
 - 1. Some claim this passage predicts the rebuilding of Solomon's temple by the returning captives after the Babylonian Captivity, but the Ezekiel 40-43 description of the temple does not fit the temple of Solomon, and the temple built after the Babylonian Captivity was not like Solomon's temple, *Ibid.*
 - 2. Some claim this passage predicts the building of the Church in a figurative sense, that Ezekiel did not describe a literal temple, *Ibid.*, p. 1303. However, this view violates the normal literal interpretation of the book of Ezekiel, and Ezekiel's earlier prophecies were all fulfilled literally, not figuratively, *Ibid.*, p. 1304.
 - 3. A third view, that Ezekiel was predicting a literal temple to be built in the future Messianic Kingdom, fits the normal interpretation of Ezekiel, and the layout of the temple Ezekiel described demands a greatly altered geographical landscape, what is expected to exist in the Millennial Kingdom (*Ibid.*, p. 1303-1304):
 - a. God took Ezekiel in a spirit vision from Babylon where he lived (Ezekiel 1:1) to the land of Israel and set him upon a very high mountain that had some buildings located to its south, Ezekiel 40:1-2.
 - b. The current temple site sits north of the old city of Zion, the City of David, somewhat fitting the same temple layout of the present temple site in Jerusalem.
 - c. However, the temple of Solomon was not nearly as large as the structure described by Ezekiel (*Ibid.*, p. 501, 1303) and 3,000 cubits would be portioned off all around the sides of Ezekiel's new temple to emphasize its holiness. Also, the description of the temple in this area is like that of a city within a wall, the entire site sitting on a very high mountain, and the "terrain of Jerusalem in Ezekiel's time could not accommodate this development," Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible, vol. Five, p. 640-641.
 - d. There will apparently be massive geographical changes made to the landscape just to accommodate the new temple, what fits Bible prophecy of Christ's Second Coming seen in Zechariah 14:4-5.
 - e. All these points emphasize the need to identify this temple as the yet future Millennial Kingdom temple.
- B. Ezekiel's tour of this temple site is led by the Preincarnate Christ Who emphasized judgment, Ezekiel 40:3-4:
 - 1. When God in the spirit realm transported Ezekiel to the land of Israel to this temple site, He brought him to a "nobleman." (*'ish*, Kittel, Bib. Heb., p. 877; Robert B. Girdlestone, Syns. of the O. T., 1973, p. 48-50)
 - 2. This nobleman is identified later in Ezekiel 44:2, 5 as the Lord Himself, the Angel of the Lord, the Preincarnate Lord Jesus Christ, Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, ftn. to Ezekiel 40:3.
 - 3. The Lord had the appearance of brass (v. 3b), the symbol of judgment for sin, emphasizing His holiness.
- C. The dimensions of the temple complex are great: the outer court measures 875 feet square with 30 rooms around its rim; three gates each measure 43.75 feet wide by 87.5 feet deep with the inner court measuring over 350 feet, and the temple itself is 175 feet long by 87.5 feet wide. (*Ibid.*, B. K. C., O. T., p. 1303, 1305, 1306)
- D. The great dimensions, the layout of the temple complex, the vast area surrounding the temple for the Lord's holiness and the temple's location on a high mountain quite separate from other dwellings below graphically illustrate what Israel failed to appreciate and heed in her treatment of Solomon's temple: she not only ignored God's great holiness, but turned to idols and even placed vile idols in the temple sanctuary! (Ezekiel 8:1-18)

Lesson: Regardless of Israel and Judah's wicked profaning of God's temple in Ezekiel's era, God in faithfulness will set His sanctuary in their midst in the Millennial Kingdom, emphasizing His holiness, His separation from sin.

Application: Since our God is holy, may we be holy like He is, separate from sin like the Lord, 1 Peter 1:16.