

# Book of Ezekiel

## Chapter 43

*Theme: Millennial Temple*

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Having described the temple, God next revealed that He approved of it.

Most commentators take the view, with some justification, that Ezekiel was describing a temple that will be built in the Millennium. Others believe that this passage of Scripture is allegorical or symbolic. However, this is far too detailed to really lend itself to an allegorical interpretation. Let's review a bit of the interesting things.

### **Missler: No Gold or Silver**

Throughout the entire nine chapters describing Ezekiel's Temple we find no gold nor silver. If you are familiar with the Book of Leviticus, you know that gold and silver were prominent Levitical emblems. If you are attentive to the details by which they are described, made, handled, serviced, you know that there is nothing trivial in God's Word. Not only is there no gold or silver, but in the description of certain implements in Ezekiel's Temple, the absence of gold is quite conspicuous. It describes the incense altar as being made of wood. The fact that gold is not there in Ezekiel's incense altar is conspicuous in that it has been edited out, so to speak.

And there is no silver mentioned. Silver was the emblem of redemption. I believe that one of the reasons why the Holy Spirit was so detailed in His description of Ezekiel's Temple, is that I think He is highlighting to us that those things which are omitted should be conspicuous by their omission.

Is there no gold there because the Messiah will be present? That is reasonable. Is there no silver there because the redemption is an accomplishment? That is reasonable. But if that is the case, then why are those sacrifices being reordained? Are they to be a memorial of the cross, just as they were a prophecy of the cross before the cross? All through the Old Testament, the sacrifices pointed to the real sacrifice, Jesus Christ. The Book of Hebrews deals with that eloquently; it makes clear that there was only one sacrifice that removed sin, and that was the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

43. 1- 12: The divine Presence (chs 1; 8- 11) returns to the Temple complex through the eastern gate from which it had earlier departed (10. 19).

### **Ezekiel 43:1**

**Afterward he brought me to the gate, *even* the gate that looketh toward the east:**

Apparently the Lord will come from the east. We will look at this again in chapter 44.

**Missler:** "Afterward" - I do not know after what. Those of you have been students of the Book of Revelation know that the word, *Meta Tauta*, "after these things," in the Greek, was a very key signal in the way the book was structured. Ezekiel may, or may not lend itself to the same kind of structural analysis.

**Constable:** Ezekiel's guide next led him to the east gate in the outer wall. This was the wall of the millennial temple that he had been seeing and continued to see, not the wall of the Solomonic temple. There the prophet saw the glory of God approaching the temple from the east (cf. Deut. 33:2; Isa. 60:1-3). Ezekiel had seen God's glory departing from Solomon's temple to the east when the Babylonians destroyed it (ch. 8; 10:4, 18-19;

11:22-25). It did not return when Zerubbabel rebuilt it or when Herod the Great remodeled it (cf. Hag. 2:7). But now the Lord was about to take up residence in His millennial temple. God's voice was as the sound of a mighty waterfall (powerful and majestic; cf. 1:24; Rev. 1:15; 14:2), and His glory illuminated the land as it passed over it (cf. Exod. 34:29-30, 35; Mark 9:3; 2 Cor. 4:6; Rev. 1:16; 18:1).

An interesting foreview of the departure and return of God's glory occurred when God's glory departed with the ark of the covenant into the Philistine camp (1 Sam. 4:19-22) and then returned when David brought the ark into Jerusalem (2 Sam. 6:17-19). Another parallel is Jesus' departure from Jerusalem in His ascension and His return to it at His second advent, both events happening on the Mount of Olives east of Jerusalem.

**ESV:** 43:1–5 The Return of God's Glory. Clearly the return of God's glory to the temple is one of the most dramatic moments in the book. His return here is the restoration counterpart to the departure in 10:18–22 and 11:23. It also brings completion to the temple tour: all that was lacking from this sacred space was God. However, this moment also forms a new beginning. The arrival of God's glory in his temple inaugurates a new era in the relationship of God and people, and this becomes the focus of the remainder of the vision.

The action takes place at the gate facing east, the main temple entrance in the vision, and the equivalent to the gate of the old temple from which God had previously departed (10:19).

**43:1-5.** In a dramatic reversal of the departure of the Lord's glory (chaps. 10-11) Ezekiel saw the glory of... God returning from the east to dwell once again in His nation. The glory of the Lord (cf. comments on 1:28) entered the temple through the gate facing east. Then the Spirit lifted Ezekiel up (cf. 3:14; 8:3; 11:1, 24; 37:1) and brought him into the inner court in front of the temple proper, and the glory of the LORD filled the temple.<sup>1</sup>

**Dake:** [to the gate, even the gate that looketh toward the east] The prophet was now taken to the east gate by which the glory of God was to return to the temple, having left Solomon's temple at the time of the captivity (Ezekiel 43:1-5 with Ezekiel 10:4). After God enters through this gate it will be closed to the public except for sabbath days and the day of the new moon, and be used only by the prince (Ezekiel 44:1-3).

### **Ezekiel 43:2**

**And, behold, the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the east: and his voice was like a noise of many waters: and the earth shined with his glory.**

**Missler:** "His voice was like a noise of many waters" is an expression you might be very familiar with if you are a student of Revelation (Rev 1:15-16). Revelation 14:2 and 19:6 repeats the phrase so the point is made.

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<sup>1</sup> The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures by Dallas Seminary Faculty.

It is an identity. In Revelation 1 there are 24 identities of Jesus Christ which were used throughout the rest of the book, and the voice of many waters was one of them. Therefore, when you get into the Old Testament and see that phrase, you will be alert to that, and it will help tie it together for you.

As background preparation, you might want to compare the following:

- Ezekiel 1 with Revelation 4;
- Ezekiel 26 and 28 with Revelation 18;
- Ezekiel 38 and 39 with Revelation 20:7-10;
- Ezekiel 40 thru 43 with Revelation 11:1-2.

Some other Revelation passages are also similar on the New Jerusalem.

**ESV:** The approach of the glory of the God of Israel recalls the overwhelming sensory experience of Ezekiel's inaugural vision: the sound of many waters describes the roar of the approach (see 1:24); its brilliance caused the earth to shine with his glory (cf. 1:27–28).

### **Ezekiel 43:3**

**And it was according to the appearance of the vision which I saw, even according to the vision that I saw when I came to destroy the city: and the visions were like the vision that I saw by the river Chebar; and I fell upon my face.**

**Missler:** There is a phrase in verse 3 that gives the translators a problem. “It was according to the appearance of the vision which I saw, even according to the vision I saw when I came to destroy the city.” The question is who is speaking? One tangent to try is Zechariah chapters 12 and 14. It is an interesting use of the first person singular pronoun there.

**Constable:** This vision reminded Ezekiel of the vision of God that he had seen by the river Chebar (1:3), when he saw God coming to judge Jerusalem (cf. 1:4-28; 9:1, 5; 32:18). He responded by prostrating himself before the Lord again (cf. 1:28; 3:23).

**ESV:** Although there are implicit links to the two prior visions, here the connections are made explicit. The vision when he came to destroy the city refers to chs. 8–11. The vision by the Chebar canal is the inaugural vision of chs. 1–3. As in 1:28b, Ezekiel fell on his face (cf. 44:4) before the holiness and majesty of God.

### **Ezekiel 43:4**

**And the glory of the LORD came into the house by the way of the gate whose prospect is toward the east.**

**Constable:** Yahweh's glory entered the temple through the east gate, the same gate through which Ezekiel had formerly seen it leave the city. The Holy Spirit transported Ezekiel in his vision to the inner court, and there he saw that God's glory had filled the temple (cf. Exod. 24:9-17; 34:29-30; Luke 2:8-10). Similarly the glory of God had come

upon and filled the tabernacle at its dedication (Exod. 40:34-35) and Solomon's temple at its dedication (1 Kings 8:10-11; 2 Chron. 5:13-14; 7:1-3).

### **Ezekiel 43:5**

**So the spirit took me up, and brought me into the inner court; and, behold, the glory of the LORD filled the house.**

**Missler:** This, in a sense, is the climax of Ezekiel's entire book. Ezekiel was a priest, called to the office of a prophet; and he went on for many, many chapters, dealing with Israel's sin, their idolatry, leading to God abandoning the Temple. If you recall Chapters 10:19 and 11:23, we read about the vision of the Shekinah Glory actually exiting the Temple, hesitating on the threshold, and then leaving the House desolate. Up until about Chapter 33, this whole book had been the hammering at the reasons for this – why God was, in effect, obligated to punish Israel for her idolatries, for her sin and so forth. If you are a student of the Book of Hosea, you will see Israel at that point in the Loammi position, where God spoke of her as “not my people” for a time (Hosea 1:9).

What we have come to here, from Ezekiel's point of view, is the climax of the book. It has come full circle, seeing the future Temple rebuilt, and the Shekinah Glory re-entering the Temple. In that sense, we are at the climax of Ezekiel's book.

The Shekinah Glory had entered the Tabernacle in the same way (Exodus 40:34-35). Likewise, when Solomon built his Temple, we find it entering there also (1 Kings 8:10-11; 2 Chronicles 5:13-14; 2 Chronicles 7:1-3).

However, we never read of the Shekinah Glory entering the Temple that was rebuilt in the time of Nehemiah, built by Zerubbabel, and subsequently modernized by Herod, the Temple Jesus Christ worshiped in. I am not suggesting that it was profaned; do not misunderstand me. The Lord Himself was there, and worshiped in it, taught in it, chased the moneychangers out, declaring it to be His Father's House.

He subsequently also left it desolate, and that is another whole study; but it is interesting that the Shekinah Glory was never mentioned as entering that 'Second' Temple. That does not mean it did not; it just means that it is not recorded in Scripture.

Now this “gate whose prospect is toward the east,” was the “East Gate” of Ezekiel 10:19 and 11:23, the very gate by which the Shekinah Glory had left. This East Gate is going to be more provocative, as we get on here a little more.

43. 5:Ezekiel recalls his inaugural vision, and reports that he is transported to the inner court where he sees 'the Presence of the Lord' filling the Temple (Exod. 40. 34- 35; 1 Kings 8. 10- 13).

**ESV:** the Spirit lifted me up. Ezekiel is transported (as in 8:3) to the inner court of the temple, where God's glory now resides.

## **Ezekiel 43:6**

**And I heard *him* speaking unto me out of the house; and the man stood by me.**

**Missler:** It says “man” here; but when you tie the verses together (2:6 and 40:3), you will discover this is again likely that what we are seeing here is the Angel of the Lord, as he appears in the Old Testament. That may, or may not, link to none other than our Lord Jesus Christ.

I heard him speaking unto me “out of the House.” Where was Ezekiel? On the outside. Where is “he”? On the inside.

**Constable:** The prophet heard someone speaking to him from the temple, and there was a man, probably Ezekiel's guide, standing beside him (cf. 1:16).

**ESV:** 43:6–12 New People for New Temple. God's return sets everything right again, but there is no relenting from the rigorous demands his holiness places on his people. Verses 7–9 combine promise and warning—or, the promise is a warning—that the bond between God and people is indissoluble (I will dwell . . . forever, v. 7) but that he will not tolerate the challenge to his supremacy that their earlier behavior had brought (vv. 8–9). The serious point about the architecture of this temple (v. 10) is that no royal palace is adjoined to it, in contrast to Solomon's temple/palace complex (see 1 Kings 7:8) and the wayward royal cult it often harbored (cf. Isa. 42:8). As Ezek. 43:11–12 makes clear, these measurements and regulations are not merely interesting details but communicate something of the character of God.

The Hebrew indicates that the man . . . standing beside me is not the same as the one speaking to me out of the temple; that is, Ezekiel's heavenly guide remains by his side, so the voice is not his. It is the very voice of God, as the first- person speech of vv. 7–9 makes clear.

43:6-9. God said the new temple is to be the place of His throne... the place... where He will live among the Israelites forever (v. 7; cf. v. 9). The temple will serve as God's earthly dwelling place among His people. God assured Ezekiel that this home would be permanent. Never again would Israel defile His holy name (cf. 20:39; 39:7) by worshiping lifeless idols, bringing destruction on the nation (43:7-8).<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures by Dallas Seminary Faculty.

### **Ezekiel 43:7**

**And he said unto me, Son of man, the place of my throne, and the place of the soles of my feet, where I will dwell in the midst of the children of Israel for ever, and my holy name, shall the house of Israel no more defile, *neither* they, nor their kings, by their whoredom, nor by the carcasses of their kings in their high places.**

**Missler:** “The place of my throne.” Oh, really. It does not sound like an angel any more, does it?

It is interesting that the first quote after the Word of the Lord enters the House is one of indictment. That is why the notion that this is on the heels of the Tribulation Period with the abomination of desolation, and all that, may not be too far-fetched. It has some problems, so I am not pushing it; but this comes on the heels of some serious difficulties.

On the one hand, Ezekiel has just finished several chapters hammering away at the harlotry of Israel and their idolatry. But bear in mind on the other hand that he suddenly has been propelled all the way forward to the Millennial period. So what he is indicting them for may, or may not be that which was historical at the time of this writing. It might be what he is indicting them for is what will be taking place at the time the Temple is being sanctified. And from that point looking back, what was most immediately distasteful to the Lord is the desecration of His Own Sanctuary.

As students of prophecy, we glibly talk about the abomination of desolation standing in the Holy place, and the causing of the sacrifice and the oblations to cease (Daniel 9). That means that the sacrifices and oblations prior to that were in process; and that means that there was a Sanctuary the was cleansed, that it was consecrated. The ashes of the red heifer, the whole routine. So it is possible that the Temple that was built, that gets cleansed, that causes all this to happen, is the Temple that Ezekiel saw, and that it does not get sanctified by the Lord this way until after a lot of other interesting things happen. That is one possibility.

Verse 7 speaks about the place of the soles of his feet. Isaiah 66:1 speaks of his footstool. 1 Chronicles 28:2 and Psalm 132:7 in both places, the Ark of the Covenant is described as his footstool. The Ark of the Covenant is also something that is surprisingly absent from Ezekiel’s Temple. However, that should not surprise us because Jeremiah 3:16 points out that it would be remembered no more, although it does show up again in the Book of Revelation in heaven.

**Constable 7-8:** The one speaking from the temple, undoubtedly the Lord, told Ezekiel that the temple was His throne, the place where He would rest His feet (take up residence) and live among the Israelites forever (cf. 1 Kings 8:12, 13, 27; 1 Chron. 28:2; Ps. 99:5; 132:7; Isa. 66:1; Jer. 3:17; 17:12). He announced that the Israelites and their leaders would no longer defile His holy reputation (cf. 39:7). They had done this by their religious prostitution and spiritual unfaithfulness to Him and by burying some of their kings too close to the temple precincts (cf. 1 Kings 21:19, 24-26). They had built their defiling graves too close to the temple, with only a wall between, not allowing some distance between them (sacred space) to honor God's holiness. The Israelites had formerly defiled His name by their sinful acts that were abominable to God (cf. 8:1-18). That was the reason He had burned them in judgment. He had been angry with them.

43. 7:God informs him that this will be 'the place of My throne' (see 1 Chron. 28. 2; Ps. 132. 7; Isa. 60. 13; Lam. 2. 1). 'The corpses of their kings' refers to burials of kings near the Temple, which defile it (1 Kings 2. 10; 11. 43; 2 Kings 21. 18, 26).

**Dake: [the place of my throne]** After describing the temple to the prophet, the Messiah declared it would be His eternal capital building among Israel and all nations of the earth (cp. Zech. 6:12-13).

**Dake: [soles of my feet]** Four things not to be defiled by Israel:

1. The place of My throne
2. The place of the soles of My feet
3. Where I will dwell in the midst of the children of Israel forever
4. My holy name

**Dake: [where I will dwell in the midst of the children of Israel for ever]** What could prove more than this that Christ will actually land on the planet earth and be visible among men again forever? He will set His feet on the Mount of Olives first (Zech. 14:4); then when this millennial and eternal sanctuary is completed He will walk into it—it will be the place of the soles of His feet, His capital building, His dwelling, His headquarters, His throne-room, and His office from where He will rule over all nations forever (Isaiah 9:6-7; Daniel 7:13-14; Zech 6:12-13; Zech 14:4-5,9; Luke 1:32-33; Rev. 11:15; Rev. 20:1-10; Rev. 22:4-5).

**Dake: [dwell in the midst of the children of Israel for ever]** This will be His dwelling as well as His office place among men. He will also eat in this building. During the Millennium He will have this as His earthly headquarters and the New Jerusalem in heaven as His heavenly home. Then at the end of the Millennium, the Holy City will come down with God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, angels, redeemed ones, and all other beings who live in the capital city of the universes of God (John 14:1-3; Hebrews 11:10-16; Hebrews 12:23; Hebrews 13:14; Rev. 3:12; Rev. 21:1-27; Rev. 22:1-5). The dwelling of God among men in those days will not be by some invisible presence, as in the most holy place between the cherubim, or manifest by a pillar of fire by night and a cloud by day. Christ will be visible among men, and so will God and the Holy Spirit be in the New Earth (Rev. 21:1-6; Rev. 22:4-5). No mention is ever made of the ark and other pieces of furniture being in the future temple, as were in the tabernacle and temples of old. The personal presence of the Lord will make such symbols of His presence unnecessary.

**Dake: [holy name]** God's holy name was defiled by Israel and their kings through whoredoms, murders, and idolatries of all kinds (2 Kings 16:11; 2 Kings 21:4,18,26). The temple of Solomon was made a place of the kings of Israel; and it was actually defiled by assassinations and murders of kings and prophets (Matthew 23:35).

**Nelson:** This temple is God's residence from which He will rule and reign over the children of Israel forever (see 37:26–28). The second half of this verse appears to predict an absolute end of the idolatrous and immoral practices of the house of Israel, which had taken place around the temple (see 2 Kin. 23:1–20). their harlotry: This is either an

allusion to their spiritual adultery in general or, more specifically and literally, to their participation in the religious prostitution of Baal worship (see 16:15). carcasses: This is taken by some as a metaphor (“lifeless idols,” see Lev. 26:30) because of the context, but it could refer to memorial graves of kings buried near the temple mount (see 2 Kin. 23:30), perhaps near the royal houses just outside the southern wall (see v. 8; 1 Kin. 7:1–12). high places: This phrase came to refer to any place of idolatrous worship, whether on a hilltop or not.

### **Ezekiel 43:8**

**In their setting of their threshold by my thresholds, and their post by my posts, and the wall between me and them, they have even defiled my holy name by their abominations that they have committed: wherefore I have consumed them in mine anger.**

**Missler:** Now this takes particular coloration if you happen to be one who has been following the archaeological speculations in Israel by Dr. Asher Kaufman and others, who have pointed out that the “Second” Temple did not stand where a lot of people thought it did. They believe it stood to the north such that it could be rebuilt without disturbing the Dome of the Rock. Their findings are quite controversial, but if they are right, then maybe the Temple could be rebuilt in a way not to bother the Dome of the Rock, and then this “wall of partition” idea may have some other meaning; but I do not hold to that. I am sharing it with you just as a provocative idea.

The Temple being built here is a much bigger thing and probably not located where you and I might think it ought to be located as we will see when we get to the next several chapters later. The geography is quite dramatically altered.

**Dake:** This describes the actual setting up of their idolatrous worship along with that of Jehovah, with merely a wall between; so God destroyed them. They were here commanded to put away such whoredom, and the carcasses of their kings from the sacred places; then God would dwell in their midst forever (Ezekiel 43:9). The prophet had the responsibility of making it clear to Israel that they had to put sin away and be ashamed of their iniquities if they were to be restored to God's favor and be shown the future plans of God's wonderful program for all eternity (Ezekiel 43:10-12).

### **Ezekiel 43:9**

**Now let them put away their whoredom, and the carcasses of their kings, far from me, and I will dwell in the midst of them for ever.**

**Missler:** Dead kings? Not mentioned in the Old Testament? Dead Idols? Leviticus 26:30. 14 kings of Judah in Jerusalem on the Southeast hill of the City of David (2 Kings 21:18, 26).

**Constable:** If the Israelites would put away their harlotry (physical and spiritual) and would refrain from burying their dead too close to holy ground, the Lord promised to dwell among them forever. While the place of burial may seem insignificant to modern Westerners, it was important to ancient Near Easterners since it expressed respect or disrespect.

This is one of many places in which a prophet conditioned the coming of God's kingdom on Israel's repentance (cf. Hag. 2:4-7; Zech. 12:10—14:9; et al.). The prophets presented the coming of the kingdom as contingent on the sovereignty of God and the enablement of the Holy Spirit as well.

### **Ezekiel 43:10**

**Thou son of man, shew the house to the house of Israel, that they may be ashamed of their iniquities: and let them measure the pattern.**

**Missler:** Now in verse 10, twice we have Ezekiel admonished to study the pattern. The House that is being discussed is the Temple with all its details.

“And let them measure the pattern.” Now that’s interesting. You will find once again in this passage in these chapters 40 thru 48, in fact twice, Ezekiel is asked to mark specifically the pattern. Thus the pattern of the House, the Temple, carries some unique, special message.

43. 10- 12: God instructs Ezekiel to teach the people the plan for the Temple.

**BKC: 43:10-12.** The man (an angel, v. 6; cf. 40:3) standing next to Ezekiel told him to describe the temple to the people of Israel, that they may be ashamed of their sins. A clear vision of God’s ideal plan would remind the people of the sins that had led to the destruction of the old temple. Another reason in sharing the design with the nation was to motivate the people to return to God and rebuild the temple: so that they may be faithful to its design and follow all its regulations. Though this prophecy was not fulfilled after the return from the Babylonian Captivity (and thus awaits a future fulfillment), the potentiality for fulfillment was there.

### **Ezekiel 43:11**

**And if they be ashamed of all that they have done, shew them the form of the house, and the fashion thereof, and the goings out thereof, and the comings in thereof, and all the forms thereof, and all the ordinances thereof, and all the forms thereof, and all the laws thereof: and write *it* in their sight, that they may keep the whole form thereof, and all the ordinances thereof, and do them.**

**Constable 10-11:** The Lord instructed Ezekiel to describe the temple that he had seen in his vision to the Israelites. It would so impress them with the glorious future that God intended to give them that they would feel ashamed of their iniquities. They should examine the plans of the future temple carefully because they would inspire obedience in the people. If the exiles responded positively to Ezekiel's revelation, they should study

the vision carefully and conform to the instructions that accompanied it. Ezekiel was about to receive information about what the Israelites should do. So far the vision dealt with what they would see.

**Dake:** Seven things that Ezekiel was to show Israel:

1. The pattern of the house (Ezekiel 43:10-11)
2. The form (model) of it (Ezekiel 43:11)
3. The fashion (structure) of it
4. The goings out of it
5. The comings in of it
6. All the ordinances of it
7. All the laws of it

### **Ezekiel 43:12**

**This is the law of the house; Upon the top of the mountain the whole limit thereof round about *shall be* most holy. Behold, this is the law of the house.**

The overriding lesson of the vision was that holiness was to permeate everything connected with the future of the mountain-top temple.

### **Ezekiel 43:13**

**And these *are* the measures of the altar after the cubits: The cubit is a cubit and an hand breadth; even the bottom *shall be* a cubit, and the breadth a cubit, and the border thereof by the edge thereof round about *shall be* a span: and this *shall be* the higher place of the altar.**

Some scholars view this section as the central one in chapters 40—48. The altar was at the very center of the whole temple complex, and it was the centerpiece of the system of worship represented in the new temple complex.

“Bottom” = bosom.

"The existence of the millennial temple and the reinstatement of the sacrificial system [though not necessarily the reinstatement of the Mosaic Covenant] is not only understandable but predictable. Ezekiel's vision of a restored sacrificial system was really not so amazing after all. The millennium will afford Israel the opportunity for the first time in its history to use the symbols of their covenant with Jesus as Messiah in view. It will be their first time to be a kingdom of priests and a holy nation showing forth to the world the redemptive work of Yahweh in the person of Jesus Christ the Messiah (Isa 53:7; 61:1-3; Zech 4:1 [*sic* 3:10]; John 1:29; Acts 8:32-35; 1 Pet 1:19; Rev 7:13-14; 5:9; 13:8; 15:3).<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> L. Cooper, p. 381

43. 13- 47. 12: The Temple complex and its activities. Instructions concerning structures associated with the Temple and regulations concerning Temple rituals and practice.

43. 13- 27: The altar (Exod. 20. 21- 23) is a four- level stepped structure, like a Mesopotamian ziggurat (a type of pyramid).

**ESV 43:13–27:** The Altar Regulations. Appropriately, given Ezekiel's priestly outlook, the starting point for the life of Israel before God is the altar. This was the location of the lowest point of Israel's sin in the previous temple vision (8:16). It again becomes the focal point for communion between God and people.

**ESV 43:13–17** The altar's design is described, just as the temple architecture was before it (vv. 13–17; cf. vv. 10–11). The altar is square, like the temple itself, with a horned projection at each corner, as Israel's altars had long been (e. g., Ex. 29:12; Ps. 118:27). In spite of (or perhaps because of) the detail, it is surprisingly difficult to visualize the altar. In broad terms, it was layered, with each succeeding layer one cubit less on each side than the one below it. The base is one cubit tall, and the sum of the layers above it totals 10 cubits. The dimensions of the base are 16 cubits square, up to the hearth at the top of the altar, which is 12 cubits square. These dimensions make it slightly smaller than the altar of Solomon's temple in 2 Chron. 4:1. For the cubit measurements, see note on Ezek. 40:5–27.

**BKC: 43:13-17.** The height of the altar was 19' feet (11 long cubits; see the sketch "The Millennial Altar"), but part of this was below ground. The height of the altar above the ground (10 cubits) corresponds to the altar constructed by Solomon (2 Chron. 4:1). However, since Solomon used the shorter 18-inch cubit (2 Chron. 3:3), the total height of his altar was only 15 feet compared with an above-ground height of 17½ feet for the millennial altar. The altar hearth, 21 feet square, was reached by a flight of steps facing east.

**Dake: [the altar]** The great sacrificial altar, corresponding with the brazen altar of the tabernacle and temples of Israel, will be placed in the very center of the whole sanctuary (when it is built in the future), and all the walls of the four great squares of note, "Ezekiel 42:20. Sacrifices will be offered on it eternally as a memorial of what was typified before the first coming of Christ. Such sacrifices were never to take away sins and they will never do so in the future; but it is interesting to note that such a program will be carried on in the presence of all coming generations throughout eternity, to demonstrate to them what Christ had to go through for them (Ezekiel 43:18-27; Ezekiel 45:13-25; Ezekiel 46:11-15).

**Dake: [bottom shall be a cubit, and the breadth a cubit, and the border thereof by the edge thereof round about shall be a span: and this shall be the higher place of the altar]** The bottom part or the foundation of the altar. This was to be a cubit (21 inches) high, and a cubit broad. The altar was to be in 2 stages upon this bottom or foundation—the upper and lower settle or ledge. The lower was to be 2 cubits (42 inches) and the breadth 1 cubit (21 inches); and the lesser was to be 4 cubits (7 feet) and

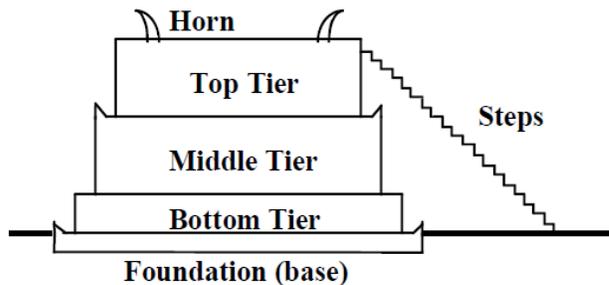
the breadth 1 cubit. The altar was to be 4 cubits and have 4 horns, one on each corner (Ezekiel 43:14-15). The whole altar was to be 12 cubits (21 feet) square (Ezekiel 43:16), the lower settle being 14 cubits (24 feet 6 inches) square with a border of half a cubit (10.5 inches) and the bottom thereof the same (Ezekiel 43:17). Stairs, which were not allowed under the law, will be permitted in the future.

### **Ezekiel 43:14**

**And from the bottom *upon* the ground *even* to the lower settle *shall be* two cubits, and the breadth one cubit; and from the lesser settle *even* to the greater settle *shall be* four cubits, and the breadth *one* cubit.**

**Constable:** The square altar rose above its foundation in three tiers, the largest one below, the next largest one above it, and the smallest one on top. The first, largest stage was two cubits (3 feet 4 inches) high and one cubit (20 inches) smaller than the

foundation on each of its four sides. The second tier was four cubits (6 feet 8 inches) high and one cubit (20 inches) smaller than the first tier on each of its four sides.



43. 14: The 'lower ledge' is 16 cubits (about 8 m or 24 ft) square. The 'upper ledge' is 14 cubits (about 7 m or 21 ft) square.

### **Ezekiel 43:15**

**So the altar *shall be* four cubits; and from the altar and upward *shall be* four horns.**

“Altar” is *arieyl* and not *mizbeach*. *Arieyl* is translated in Isaiah 29:1 as “the Lion of God.”

**Constable:** The third tier, which formed the altar hearth, the very top of the altar, was also four cubits (6 feet 8 inches) high. Four horns stood on the top of the altar, one at each corner undoubtedly, symbolizing strength. This tier, the hearth, was 12 cubits (20 feet) wide on each side.

43. 15: The 'hearth' (Heb "hahar'el," "mountain of God" or "God appeared"; compare Ariel of Isa. 29. 1) with '4' 'horns,' see Exod. 27. 2; 29. 12; 1 Kings 1. 50- 51; Zech. 2. 1-4. The height of the structure is 10 cubits (5 m or 15 ft).

### **Ezekiel 43:16**

**And the altar *shall be twelve cubits long, twelve broad, square in the four squares thereof.***

### **Ezekiel 43:17**

**And the settle *shall be fourteen cubits long and fourteen broad in the four squares thereof; and the border about it shall be half a cubit; and the bottom thereof shall be a cubit about; and his stairs shall look toward the east.***

**Missler:** Everybody on the stairs will be facing West. All the priests did their thing facing west, not east, because east was classically the sun-worship direction, so this is similar to the Old Testament practice.

Stairs are mentioned here, and it is interesting to note that stairs were prohibited for ascending the altar (Exodus 20:26). Josephus, in describing the Second Temple, does describe that there was a ramp up to the altar.

**Constable:** The second tier was 14 cubits (23 feet 4 inches) square. It too had a curb around its upper edge that formed a gutter, and that curb was half a cubit high (10 inches, cf. v. 13). There were to be steps up to the altar from the east. Formerly the Lord had forbidden the use of steps leading up to His altars (Exod. 20:24, 26). The total size of this altar was about 18 cubits (30 feet) square at the bottom, 20 feet square at the top, and 16 feet 8 inches high. Solomon's brazen altar had been smaller (cf. 2 Chron. 4:1). This design made this altar resemble a small ziggurat.

43. 17:Its 'ramp' faces the eastern gate.

### **Ezekiel 43:18**

**And he said unto me, Son of man, thus saith the Lord GOD; These *are the ordinances of the altar in the day when they shall make it, to offer burnt offerings thereon, and to sprinkle blood thereon.***

**Missler:** Now one thing that comes up as we go through the consecration of the altar is that there were seven days of celebration. Exodus 29:37; Leviticus 8:11, 15, 19, 33; 1 Kings 8:62-66; and 2 Chronicles 7:4-10 are all references to previous consecration. We find the same will be so for Ezekiel's Temple.

**Constable:** The Lord told Ezekiel what to do when the construction of the altar was complete. The purpose of this altar was to receive the burnt offerings that people would bring to the Lord and to receive the blood of those animal sacrifices.

"The offerings presented thereon were meant to be memorials, much as the Lord's Supper is no efficacious sacrifice but a memorial of a blessedly adequate and all

sufficient sacrifice for all time. Thus, whereas the sacrifices of the Old Testament economy were prospective, these are retrospective."<sup>4</sup>

Since Old Testament saints will experience resurrection at Christ's second coming (Isa. 26:19; Dan. 12:2-3, 13), perhaps Ezekiel himself will lead this purification ceremony at the beginning of the Millennium. Alternatively the Lord may have dealt with him in the vision as He will deal with the person in charge of the real purification ceremony when it occurs.

43. 18- 26: The seven- day consecration of the altar is performed at Sukkot (Tabernacles; 1 Kings 8. 65- 66; Ezra 3. 1- 7; but cf. Num. ch 7) and resembles the ordination of priests (Exod. 29. 1- 37; Lev. ch 8).

**ESV 43:18–27** This section describes the rituals of purification required for the altar before it is fit for regular use. Although the preceding verses have focused on the altar's design, its actual material required consecration for use in the sacred realm. This also explains why the ritual focuses on the application of the blood to the altar rather than on the sacrifice itself. The first day's sacrifice is described in detail in vv. 18–21 when a single bull is offered by the Zadokite priests. Less detail, but more sacrifice on day two (vv. 22–24) sets the pattern for the succeeding days until the seven days (vv. 25–26) of the consecration are complete. Once again a link is forged to Moses and the tabernacle, as a similar pattern is found in Ex. 29:36b–37. This sacred "isolation" of the altar addresses the abomination condemned in Ezek. 43:8.

**43:18** The practice of throwing blood against the altar is well attested in the Pentateuch, especially those passages dealing with priests (e. g., Ex. 24:6; 29:20; and 11 more times in Leviticus alone).

**BKC 43:18-27.** A seven-day ritual will be employed by the priests... of Zadok (cf. 40:46) to set the altar apart to the LORD. This consecration service will be similar in some ways to the services followed by Moses (Ex. 40:10, 29) and Solomon (2 Chron. 7:8-9) to sanctify their houses of worship to God. After seven days of offering bulls, goats, and rams the priests will present the people's burnt offerings and fellowship offerings on the altar. This process will mark the full resumption of God's fellowship with His people, as then God will accept them. These sacrifices will point Israelites to Christ who will have given them access to the Father (Heb. 10:19-25).

### **Ezekiel 43:19**

**And thou shalt give to the priests the Levites that be of the seed of Zadok, which approach unto me, to minister unto me, saith the Lord GOD, a young bullock for a sin offering.**

**McGee:** In this section we are dealing with the worship in the temple. The sacrifices offered will be memorial in character. They will look back to the work of Christ on the

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<sup>4</sup> Feinberg, p. 254

Cross, as the offering of the Old Testament anticipated His sacrifice. In chapter 45 we will go into more detail about this.

**Constable 19-21:** Ezekiel was to give to one of the priests that would serve in this sanctuary, a priest from the honored line of Zadok (cf. 40:46; 44:15; 1 Kings 2:35), a young bull for a sin offering. He was to smear some of the bull's blood on the four horns of the altar and on the four corners of its second tier (cf. Exod. 29:12). This would cleanse the altar and make atonement for it (i.e., purify it).<sup>576</sup> Similar ceremonies had taken place to cleanse the tabernacle and Solomonic temple altars (cf. Exod. 29:36-37; Lev. 8:14-17; 2 Chron. 7:9). Ezekiel was to burn the remainder of this bull outside the inner court (cf. Lev. 8:17).

"Cleansing was needed because everything associated with man partook of sin and therefore needed to be cleansed, especially if it was to be used in the worship of the Lord."

### **Ezekiel 43:20**

**And thou shalt take of the blood thereof, and put *it* on the four horns of it, and on the four corners of the settle, and upon the border round about: thus shalt thou cleanse and purge it.**

The purification of the altar with blood is analogous to the sprinkling of blood on the priests at their ordination (Exod. 29. 16), on the altar at Yom Kippur to make atonement for the people (Lev. 16. 18- 19), and on the people to seal the covenant (Exod. 24. 1- 8). In Priestly literature, blood is understood as a ritual detergent.

### **Ezekiel 43:21**

**Thou shalt take the bullock also of the sin offering, and he shall burn it in the appointed place of the house, without the sanctuary.**

### **Ezekiel 43:22**

**And on the second day thou shalt offer a kid of the goats without blemish for a sin offering; and they shall cleanse the altar, as they did cleanse *it* with the bullock.**

**Constable 22-24:** The next day Ezekiel was to offer a ram that was free of blemishes as a sin offering. This also was part of the seven-day ritual necessary to cleanse the altar. Then he should present another bull and another ram, equally blemish free, in the inner court. The priest was to throw salt on them, slay them, and offer them as burnt offerings. Salt was an agent of purification and preservation that was often used symbolically (cf. Lev. 2:13; Num. 18:19; 2 Chron. 13:5; Mark 9:49).

43. 22- 25: The use of a 'goat' as sin offering for the dedication of the Temple is an innovation.

### **Ezekiel 43:23**

**When thou hast made an end of cleansing *it*, thou shalt offer a young bullock without blemish, and a ram out of the flock without blemish.**

### **Ezekiel 43:24**

**And thou shalt offer them before the LORD, and the priests shall cast salt upon them, and they shall offer them up *for* a burnt offering unto the LORD.**

'Salt' is offered with grain offerings (Lev. 2. 13; Num. 18. 19). Ezek. 43. 10- 27 is the haftarah for the parashah of Tetsavveh (Exod. 27. 20- 30. 10), which relates the consecration of the priests and the construction of the altar.

### **Ezekiel 43:25**

**Seven days shalt thou prepare every day a goat *for* a sin offering: they shall also prepare a young bullock, and a ram out of the flock, without blemish.**

**Constable 25-26:** On each of the seven days Ezekiel was to prepare a goat for a sin offering and a young bull and a ram as burnt offerings. These sacrifices also had to be without blemish, and they would make atonement and purify the altar. This seven-day ceremony would consecrate the altar for service (cf. Exod. 29:36-37).

### **Ezekiel 43:26**

**Seven days shall they purge the altar and purify it; and they shall consecrate themselves.**

### **Ezekiel 43:27**

**And when these days are expired, it shall be, *that* upon the eighth day, and *so* forward, the priests shall make your burnt offerings upon the altar, and your peace offerings; and I will accept you, saith the Lord GOD.**

**Missler:** So the first seven days will consecrate the altar, and after that it will be the basis for their acceptability procedurally here. What is interesting of these offerings is that not all of the Levitical ones are detailed here, and so there is a question. Why are some omitted? Are the ones that are not mentioned a significant omission? Or are they included by implication? It remains an open question.

**Constable:** After the completion of this consecration ceremony, from the eighth day onward, the priests were to offer burnt and peace offerings on this altar. The Lord promised to accept the worship of His people if they followed this procedure.

"Although all the offerings of Leviticus are not detailed here, it is considered by some that they are implied, and they may well be. Prospectively they all pointed to Christ,

so this would be in keeping with that truth in the retrospective sense."<sup>5</sup>

Most premillennialists believe that the millennial sacrifices will be memorials of Christ's sacrifice and will have nothing to do with removing sin.<sup>6</sup>

However, some premillennialists argue that since Christ will be personally present on earth during the Millennium, these sacrifices may really purge sins, the sins of believers. The argument rests on the meaning of "atone." Now Christians confess our sins and receive forgiveness (1 John 1:9), but now Christ is not present on earth. When He is personally present and in closer contact with His people, it may take more than just confession to secure adequate cleansing. This may be a correct explanation for the presence of sacrifices in the Millennium, but it seems impossible to be dogmatic about that now. A third view is that the sacrifices are not literal, but that Ezekiel was describing worship in the future in terms and forms that he and his original hearers knew.

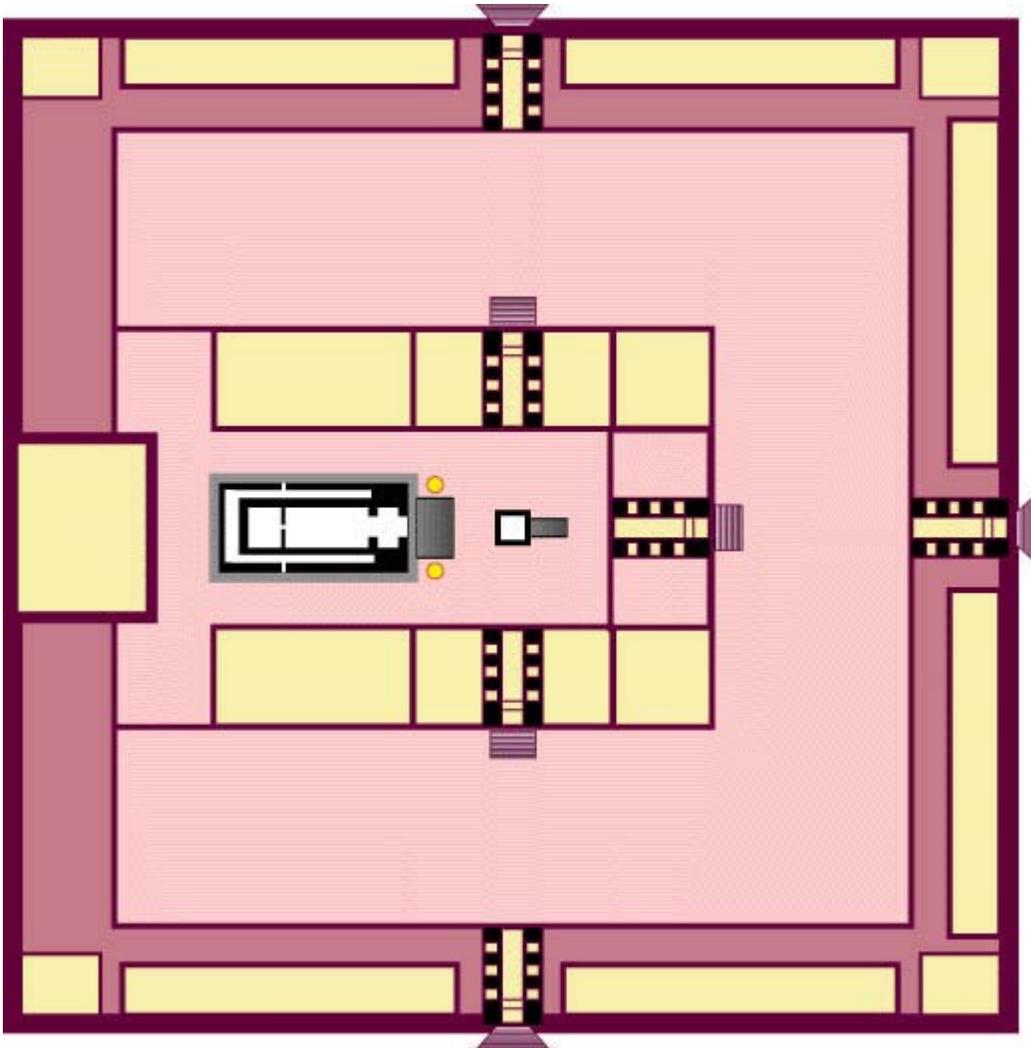
**ESV:** Only after the entire week of purification is the altar ready for the round of sacrificial offerings, which were provided to ensure continuing communion with God.

**Dake:** When the seven days of consecration for the altar and priests are finished, the priest will offer sacrifices to God—on the eighth day and every day after that.

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<sup>5</sup> Fewinberg, p. 256

<sup>6</sup> 579E.g., Ibid., p. 254; Walvoord, *The Millennial . . .*, pp. 312-14; and Clive A. Thomson, "The Necessity of Blood Sacrifices in Ezekiel's Temple," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 123:491 (July 1966):237-48.



## The Temples of the Bible

- (1) **Solomon's Temple.** The construction of this temple by Solomon was a fulfillment of David's desire to build a "house for the Lord"—a desire which he was never to realize in his lifetime (2 Sam 7:1-29). The temple was built after the death of David and dedicated by his son (1 Kin 8:1ff.). This temple was destroyed by the armies of Nebuchadnezzar at the fall of Jerusalem in 586 B.C. (Jer 32:28-44).
- (2) **Zerubbabel's Temple.** This is the one under construction during the ministry of the prophet Zechariah. It was completed and dedicated in 516 B.C. (Ezra 6:1-22). It was constructed under the direction of Zerubbabel (Ezra 3:1-8; 4:1-14) who was a descendant of David (1 Chr 3:19). This temple was desecrated in 169 B.C. by Antiochus Epiphanes.
- (3) **Herod's Temple.** Restoration of Zerubbabel's temple began in 19 B.C. under the administration of Herod the Great. The temple was nearing completion in A.D. 70, after nearly 90 years of renovation and enlargement, when it was destroyed by the Romans. Since this time there has been no temple in Jerusalem.
- (4) **The Present Temple.** There is a temple in which the Lord reigns at present. According to 1 Cor 6:19 and 2 Cor 6:16-18 the present temple of the Lord is the heart of the believer. There the Lord reigns until the day when the Messiah will return and set up His earthly kingdom and the millennial temple.
- (5) **The Temple of Revelation 11.** This temple will be constructed during the Tribulation by the Antichrist. It is mentioned in 2 Thess 2:4 as the site for the abomination of desolation mentioned by Daniel the prophet (Dan 9:2) and Jesus (Matt 24:15). This temple will be destroyed with the kingdom of the Antichrist (see Rev 17; 18).
- (6) **The Millennial Temple.** This is the temple that is described in detail in Ezek 40:1-42:20. It is this temple that the prophet Zechariah has in view in 6:12, 13. It will be built by the Messiah Himself, who will rule in it as the righteous Priest-King of His own millennial kingdom (6:13).
- (7) **The Eternal Temple of His Presence.** This temple is presented in Rev 21:22. John says there will be no physical temple in the eternal kingdom because "...the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple." This temple will be the greatest of all and it will be the focus of the eternal kingdom as it is presented in Rev 21; 22.

**Missler:** Chuck Missler KHouse Ministries Commentary on Ezekiel

**JSB:** The Jewish Study bible, Jewish Publication society Tanakh Translation,  
Adele Berlin and Marc Zvi Brettler – Editors, Michael fishbane – Consulting Deitor

**Constable:** Dr. Constable’s Notes on Ezekiel; 2010 Edition

**McGee:** Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.