

“THE LORD IS THERE”

Ezekiel 40-48

Introduction

- 1) The final section of the prophecy of **Ezekiel** (chapters 40-48) is a marvelous vision of a new temple and its surroundings
- 2) Theories of interpretation
 - a) **Literal** – a blueprint for a future restored temple
 - b) **Symbolic** – a figurative depiction of the glories that will be enjoyed by God’s people in the return of the remnant to Israel and/or later in messianic kingdom of Christ
 - c) **Dispensationalist** – vision applies literally and symbolically to a future end-time millennial kingdom and temple
- 3) This vision does not fit any literal temple that once stood in Jerusalem or the erroneous doctrine of an end-time millennial temple, but is best interpreted as a symbolic “Jewish” picture of the glories that awaited God’s people first in the return and restoration of the faithful remnant and later in the messianic kingdom of Christ [church] and the eternal city of God

I) **The Vision (40:1-4)**

- A) **Date:** 573 BC (25th year of captivity; 14th year after capture of city of Jerusalem)
- B) Ezekiel taken to Israel to a high mountain – structure on the south side
- C) Bronze man there with measuring line and rod – heavenly surveyor/architect (angel?)
 - 1) Gives 318 precise measurements and 37 unique architectural terms (door posts, etc.)
 - 2) Ezekiel is to look, listen, and fix his mind on what he sees as he is taken on a guided tour so that he may teach Israel what he sees

II) **The New Temple (Ch. 40-43)**

- A) Boundary wall, the three gateways, and the outer court with chambers (40:5-27)
- B) Inner court, its three gateways, chamber and tables for preparation of sacrifices, chambers for the singers and priests, and the temple porch [vestibule] (40:28-49)
- C) The temple area, the sanctuary, the side chambers, and the building in back (41:1-26)
- D) Chambers for the priests and outer dimensions of main wall (42:1-20)
- E) The return of the Lord and His glory to the new temple (43:1-12)
 - 1) This is nineteen years after Ezekiel’s first temple vision when God left his former sanctuary due to its desecration (Ezek. 8-11; esp. 8:1-6; 10:18-19)
 - 2) The Lord’s glory fills this temple as it had Solomon’s temple (1 Kgs. 8:10-11)
 - a) Came into temple by way of the east gate (had left by the east gate – 10:19; 11:23)
 - 3) The Lord’s dedication speech – a place of fellowship with His people, a separation from wickedness, and a pattern for obedience to God’s law and shame for their sins
- F) Altar of burnt offerings (43:13-27)
- G) Interesting that there is no mention of the ark of the covenant, lampstand, altar of incense, veil, table of shewbread, laver, court of women or gentiles

III) **The New Worship (Ch. 44-46)**

- A) The east gate to be shut [off-limits] because the Lord entered by it (44:1-3)
 - 1) An exception will be for the prince (more on this in chapter 46)
- B) No foreigners allowed in God’s sanctuary (44:4-9)
- C) Duties of priests (44:10-31)
 - 1) Priests who had been unfaithful given menial tasks (vv. 10-14)
 - 2) Faithful priests [sons of Zadok, 1 Kgs. 2:35] serve the Lord in sanctuary (vv. 15-31)
 - a) Examples of faithful teaching and obedience (vv. 23-24)

- D) A holy land district for priests (45:1-5)
- E) Properties of the city and the prince (45:6-8)
- F) Regulations governing the prince, the national offering, cleansing the sanctuary, national festivals, and manner of worship (45:9-46:15)
 - 1) The prince will only enter and leave through east gate, while people must leave by a different gate than they entered (e.g. enter north gate, leave south gate)
- G) Prince and inheritance laws (46:16-18)
- H) Kitchens for preparing offerings (46:19-24)

IV) The New Land (Ch. 47-48)

- A) A river of water of life (47:1-12; cp. Joel 3:18; Zech. 14:8)
 - 1) Flows east from the sanctuary [presence] of God and deepens as it goes (toward Dead Sea)
 - 2) On the banks of this healing river are many trees which provide food and healing
- B) The borders of the land (47:13-23)
 - 1) North, east, south, and west borders (cp. Numbers 34)
 - 2) Strangers [foreigners] who live among Israelites to be included
- C) Division of the land (48:1-29)
 - 1) Portions for each of the twelve tribes along with a portion for the priests, sanctuary, and prince
- D) The gates and name of the city (48:30-35)
 - 1) Gates named for the twelve tribes of Israel
 - 2) Name of the city will be **“The LORD Is There”** (Heb. *Yahweh Shammah*)
 - a) “The name tells of complete satisfaction; that of God, and that of man. God is at rest among His people, His original purpose realized. Man is seen at rest in God, his true destiny reached” (Morgan)

V) Important Lessons and Parallels

- A) The “temple” is a major theme in the Bible (Heb. *hekal* – palace, great house)
 - 1) Represented God’s fellowship and name dwelling among His people (“house of God”)
 - 2) Three versions of the physical Jewish temple:
 - a) Solomon’s temple (1 Kgs. 6-8; esp. 8:20, 27-29)
 - b) Zerubbabel’s temple (Ezra 3-6; esp. 3:8; 5:2; 6:15)
 - c) Herod’s temple (Jn. 2:13-14, 20)
 - 3) New Testament “temple” = not physical, but spiritual – the people of God (Eph. 2:19-22)
 - a) Church = house of God (1 Tim. 3:15)
 - b) Christians = spiritual house, holy priesthood (1 Pet. 2:5, 9)
 - c) High Priest = Christ, who makes atonement (Heb. 2:17)
 - d) Sacrifices = living sacrifices of service and worship (Rom. 12:1; Heb. 13:15)
- B) Importance of purity in God’s temple
 - 1) Church (1 Cor. 3:16-17)
 - 2) Individual (1 Cor. 6:19-20)
 - 3) Both church and individual (2 Cor. 6:14-7:1)
- C) Beautiful picture of the glories of dwelling in fellowship with God
 - 1) Garden of Eden – water, trees, fellowship, purity
 - 2) Parallels in the eternal city (Rev. 21:3, 6-7, 10-13, 15-16, 22, 27; 22:1-3)

Conclusion

Some of the most beautiful pictures painted in Scripture describe and symbolize the fellowship of God and His people. Some of the most terrifying are those that picture being separated from God. God can and will cleanse His people and His temple from sin, making us holy in His sight. Are you a part of His spiritual temple today, the church of Christ?