

Ezekiel Ch 42:1–43:12 • “Write it Down in Their Sight”

Background Ch 40–48 is the last major section of Ezekiel, in which God sets forth exacting instructions for construction of a new temple in the Millennial Kingdom, as well as for the ministry that will take place in and around it. As discussed in previous messages, the degree of detail in these chapters confirms what we already know from basic hermeneutics — the temple described here is neither historical nor metaphorical but rather real and literal.

v1-9 Ezekiel led from temple porch to a tour of priests' chambers outside the temple. Dimensions of the building(s) housing those chambers are 175' long x 87½' wide. Three levels ; 17½' wide passageway.

v10-12 Mirror image of above on south side.

v13-14 Purpose of these spaces is communal dining room for priests to consume portions of sacrifices allocated to them (cf Leviticus) — skin of burnt offering, portion of grain offering, fat of sin & trespass offering. Note no mention of peace offering (in OT priests would be given the brisket and the thigh of peace offering).

Also functioned as changing room — priests were to leave the clothes they wore in this space behind before leaving to minister to people.

v15-16 Next stop is temple courtyard; Ezekiel & angel survey outer wall. Translations differ (because manuscripts differ) — are these units cubits (21") or rods (6 cubits = 126"). 500 rods would be just under a mile (5250' cf a mile is 5280'). A temple compound a mile square would be larger than the temple mount as currently exists. BUT we know the topology of Jerusalem and surrounding area changes dramatically upon Christ's return (eg Ch 40v2). Either way, however, this temple is still much larger than any of previous temples.

Ch 42 New American Commentary notes several symbolic elements of the Millennial Temple: (a) temple has three divisions, echoing God's Trinitarian nature; (b) use of the number 8 (steps to inner court, tables for preparing sacrifice, sacrifices offered on 8th day — 8 is the number of new beginnings; (c) 3 levels in sanctuary and side chambers (again @ Trinity); (d) attention given to doors throughout (Jesus is the Door); (e) palm trees speak of peace and longevity in OT esp. Psalms — Jesus is Prince of Peace and Everlasting God; (f) Altar (obviously) points to Jesus; (g) symmetry and boundaries throughout point to perfection and holiness.

- 43v1-4 Connects back to Ch 8–10 when Ezekiel saw (vision) God’s glory LEAVING the temple. That vision now bookended by another one in which Ezekiel is given promise of His return. Note the Shekinah Glory returns from the east (v2) – same direction to which departed. *NKJV translation of v3 is clumsy — GOD destroyed temple, not Ezekiel!* Note that Ezekiel’s response to both visions is same: falls face down!
- v5 God’s glory filling the temple — cf 1 Kings 8; 2 Chronicles 5.
Note the Holy Spirit (not angel) does the transportation this time!
- v6 Voice of GOD (not angel) speaking from within the temple.
- v7a Some commentators make much of God here describing the temple as His “footstool” — which has biblical basis (eg Hebrews; Revelation) the true temple is in heaven. But that doesn’t prevent THIS temple from functioning AS a temple.
- v7b–9 Harlotry is obviously a reference to Israel’s spiritual idolatry. Carcasses & walls — Solomon built his palace so close to the temple they were almost touching. AND he worshipped idols in his palace AND he buried dead bodies on the property (2 Kings 21). God is calling those offenses out in order to announce a new start where those violations won’t be repeated.
- v10-12 God instructs Ezekiel to record and distribute the details and specifications contained in these chapters that Israel might be ashamed of her past conduct (v10) and determined not to repeat it (v11). Note that Ezekiel is supplying this detail and therefore this exhortation not to the future builders of the temple but to the Israel of his day! God is calling His people to holiness!
- APP* *God is calling US to holiness! God has specific ideas about what holiness is and how we should pursue it, and His instructions to us are (big picture) the same as His instructions to Israel — “Be holy as I am holy!” Like Israel we corrupted our former lives; unlike past Israel our judgment was poured out on Jesus so we could rebuild our lives according to His specifications so our bodies (aka temples of the Holy Spirit) could be dedicated wholly and completely to holiness!*
- The fact that we live in an age of grace doesn’t change God’s goal for our lives (holiness). And we shouldn’t overlook, skip past, or disregard God’s goal for our lives — like Ezekiel we should note the details carefully, observe them, obey them, and share them!*