

Ezekiel 40-43 • A vision of the Temple

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Ezekiel chapter 40. This starts a new section of the book of Ezekiel. So, I'll tell you all about it here. But let's pray first, shall we.

Father, we thank you for the opportunity tonight to gather in this place and to study your word because Lord, we believe that the Word of God is what it says about itself: living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword. We believe, Lord God, that as we take in the word that there are things that take place in our lives, that stability results in our lives, in our hearts.

We pray that you would speak to us and give wisdom and insight and understanding. Help us, Lord, to lay hold of the things that are most important. We thank you and praise you. We ask for your blessing upon our time in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen.

For those of you who have read through the book of Ezekiel in the past, you might remember that when you come to chapter 40 through the end of the book, you start this 9 chapter single vision from the Lord. All 9 of these final chapters of the book encompass 1 vision that God gave to Ezekiel concerning the temple, some worship directions related to the temple, and some other little odds and ends. But you'll notice here that the chapter begins by giving us a date stamp. And we always want to look at those because those give us some interesting sort of an understanding of the timeline.

It says in verse 1, "*In the twenty-fifth year of our exile,*" that means that the southern kingdom of Judah was now in their 25th year of being exiled out of their country and living in the Persian kingdom. 25 years. How long were they going to be there total? 70 years. But so they're into it a bit here now.

He says, "*at the beginning of the year, on the tenth day of the month, in the fourteenth year after the city was struck down,*" now, what this means when we look at this timestamp is that this is a little more than a decade after the previous chapters that we studied. It's now been a little over a decade, probably around 12 years since we have frankly kind of heard from Ezekiel.

And he says here still in verse 1 that, *"on that very day, the hand of the LORD was upon me, and he brought me to the city."* Now, when he says *"he brought me to the city"* he's talking about a vision. That God gave him a vision. Because Ezekiel is in the Persian kingdom. He is one of the exiles, and it would take a long time to travel back to the city of Jerusalem. So the Lord brings him back in an instant. And through this vision, he suddenly just finds himself back in the city.

And as we get into this chapter, and as we go through, frankly, the rest of the chapters of this book (which we will not get through all tonight, I'll tell you right now so you don't have to be worried), Ezekiel is going to receive a vision from the Lord concerning the temple.

Now, again, I want to remind you of something. When Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, came in and attacked the city, what he says here, 14 years ago, 14 years from the time of this writing, 14 years previously, the temple was destroyed. The temple was completely demolished. They are going to rebuild it when they come back. And that's what the books of Ezra and Nehemiah are largely about. Mostly Ezra.

So the temple is going to be rebuilt. But this is a letter, this is a vision, that God has given Ezekiel to tell the nation of Israel to give them a word of encouragement. God is still with them. The temple is going to be rebuilt, and God is going to continue to minister to the nation of Israel.

But here's the question. This has plagued Bible students and Bible scholars for years. You see, there's a problem. Ezekiel is going to be given incredible detail on how the temple is going to exist. He's going to actually follow an angel around in this vision. And this angel is going to measure the temple and the outer courts and the walls, and he's going to get into all kinds of incredible detail.

We'll talk about that detail in just a little bit. Here's the problem. That's not the temple that they built at the end of 70 years. We call that Zerubbabel's temple. The dimensions don't fit. In fact, the dimensions that Ezekiel gives (and that's why this is called Ezekiel's temple), these dimensions don't fit anything we have ever seen up to this point.

So that's a challenging sort of a insight right there. Even Herod's Temple, we call the last temple that stood in Jerusalem, Herod's Temple. And you remember that was destroyed by the Romans in AD 70. And that's the last temple that stood. There hasn't been a temple since.

In fact, on the Temple Mount, there's something else now. The Dome of the Rock, a mosque, is there now. So what temple is Ezekiel seeing in this vision? We know, because we've looked a lot at eschatological scriptures. Eschatology, meaning the study of the last days or the last things. We know that the temple is going to be rebuilt at some point.

I personally believe it's going to be rebuilt in the first three and a half years of the tribulation, the great tribulation. Now, that's just my personal opinion. I don't really have anything to base that on necessarily, except that we know the temple is going to be rebuilt. Because midway through the tribulation or that seven-year period, midway through, we know that the antichrist is going to set his image in the temple and demand the worship of the world. Of the Jews and the world.

We know that the temple will be rebuilt and that midway through the great tribulation, it will be there. How exactly before that it's built, we're not sure. So we know that the temple is going to be rebuilt and there are other prophets that speak of the temple.

But we also know that temple that is built during the great tribulation and that the antichrist sets his image in. That temple is going to be desecrated by the antichrist. It seems strange to me that after the abomination that causes desolation establishes his image there in the temple, it seems strange to me that that's going to be the working temple in Jerusalem after that time.

Most Bible scholars believe that they're probably going to tear down that temple that goes up during the tribulation period and that the antichrist establishes his image in. And that they're going to rebuild a temple and that it will be rebuilt according to Ezekiel's standards here. And that would mean that Ezekiel's temple is the millennial temple, or we call it the kingdom age or the messianic kingdom temple, if you will.

And, you know, frankly, there are other prophets that speak of a temple during the millennial age. Prophets like Isaiah, Jeremiah, Joel, Micah, Haggai and Zechariah all make reference to a temple in the millennial age. So it's not farfetched to believe that could be the case with Ezekiel's temple.

But here's another problem. I'm going to tell you about the problems before we get to them, okay? So that when we get to them, you're all prepared. There are other problems with believing that what Ezekiel is going to see in this vision is the millennial temple. And the problem is that when we get through these

chapters, you're going to see that there's an active sacrificial system going on in this temple.

Animals are going to be sacrificed. The blood is going to be placed upon the altar. And you know, that's caused all kinds of people to doubt. Well, why would this be the temple that is erected during the millennial kingdom and have a sacrificial system going in it when we know that the ultimate sacrifice has already been paid?

Jesus Christ died on the cross for our sins as a fulfillment of the Old Testament sacrificial system. So why then would there be a sacrificial process going on in this millennial temple? And I agree it could cause a problem. Unless we see those sacrifices that are going on in the temple in the same way that we see our own observance of the Lord's table.

In other words, if we see those as being done in memorial of what Christ did, of the final sacrifice of Jesus Christ, I think that is at least a possibility. Because when we get through these chapters and you're going to see something. That even though the sacrificial system is going on in this temple that Ezekiel sees, there are plenty of other things from the Old Testament that are missing out of this temple.

For example, there are some feasts that are mentioned. But the feast of Pentecost is nowhere mentioned in the course of these chapters related to this temple. You'll remember that the church fulfilled the feast of Pentecost, the feast of ingathering. It was on Pentecost that Peter preached that wonderful message and 3,000 people got saved and were added to the church that day (Acts 2:41).

So that was a fulfillment of that ingathering, of Pentecost. There's also in this temple, interestingly enough, no mention of the veil that was torn in two when Jesus died on the cross. The veil is not mentioned. And you remember that the tearing of that veil was a symbolic statement that God made. That the way into the Holy of Holies was now open to all people through the body of Jesus Christ and His sacrifice.

There's also no mention of the Ark of the Covenant in this temple, which of course was the symbol of God's presence among His people. You don't find it in Ezekiel's temple. And finally, there's no mention of a high priest. No mention. It'll talk about the priests, even the Levites, but it won't talk about a high priest. Because as you know, Hebrews makes it very clear, as do some other books of the Bible in the New Testament, that Jesus is our high priest.

So that position has been filled, if you will. You can see that there are some key Old Testament things that are missing from this temple that we're going to be looking at in these latter chapters of Ezekiel. But yet, there's this troublesome issue of the sacrificial system that's going on.

And so this has really caused Bible teachers, Bible scholars, Bible students to really scratch their head for a long long time. In fact, I wanted to share for you a quote from Matthew Henry's commentary of the whole Bible. Check this out on the screen. Here's what he wrote. He says:

"Here is one continued vision, beginning at this chapter, to the end of the book, which is justly looked upon to be one of the most difficult portions of scripture in all the [Bible]. The Jews will not allow any to read it till they are thirty years old, and tell those who do read it that, they cannot understand everything in it. Many commentators, both ancient and modern, have owned themselves at a loss what to make of it and what use to make of it. But because it is hard to be understood we must not therefore throw it by, but humbly search concerning it, get as far as we can into it and as much as we can out of it, and, when we despair of satisfaction in every difficulty we meet with, bless God that our salvation does not depend upon it, but that things necessary are plain enough, and wait till God shall reveal even this unto us."

Isn't that well said? A little bit Old English, but still very well said as it relates to just these last 9 chapters of the book of Ezekiel. So, I'm going to tell you right here and right now that in these last 9 chapters, there's not going to be a tremendous amount of devotional content.

We're going through these chapters to help you understand why they're there, and to help you understand what they say. But let's go on now, and let's read this vision that Ezekiel had, that encompasses all these 9 chapters.

Verse 2, he says, "*In visions of God he brought me to the land of Israel, and set me down on a very high mountain, on which was a structure like a city to the south.*" Now I find that a very interesting comment in light of this timing thing we're talking about that the first thing is Ezekiel says is I saw a structure like a city. Now, Ezekiel would have known exactly what the city of Jerusalem would have looked like in its ancient form. But somehow he's telling you and me that what he sees is different.

He says it's like a city. So it's very possible that what Ezekiel is seeing is a future rendition, if you will, of the city of Jerusalem. It's not like anything he

has seen. Therefore, he falls back on the language of similarity and says it's like a city.

Verse 3, *"³When he brought me there, behold, there was a man whose appearance was like bronze, with" (and by the way, that's an angel) "a linen cord" (your Bible may say a line of flax or even a rope) "and a measuring reed in his hand."* Once again, your Bible may say a measuring rod. Now, don't get all weirded out about this linen or cord or this reed or rod, depending on the Bible translation. They were just tools used to measure like you and I would use a ruler or a yardstick.

And it tells us at the very end of verse 3, *"And he was standing in the gateway."* And the gateway is part of the temple proper. And it says in verse 4, *"⁴And the man said to me, "Son of man, look with your eyes, and hear with your ears, and set your heart upon all that I shall show you, for you were brought here in order that I might show it to you."*

And then Ezekiel is told why he's seeing this vision. He says, *"Declare all that you see to the house of Israel."* So we know about this vision. It was not closed. It's an open vision. You know, Daniel received information from the Lord and the Lord said, seal it up. This is for the time of the end (Daniel 12:9). It's not to be known now. It's not to be declared now. It's for later.

But that's not the case with what Ezekiel is being shown. The angel tells him you are to declare this to the people of Israel, or to the house of Israel, even though they're in exile in the Babylonian empire.

Verse 5, *"⁵And behold, there was a wall all around the outside of the temple area, and the length of the measuring reed in the man's hand was six long cubits,"* in other words, the reed was made up of 6 long cubits. We would say something like a yardstick was made up of 3 12-inch rulers. That's kind of the same language. He says, *"each being a cubit and a handbreadth in length."* And so what that means is this reed that he's going to use to measure is approximately 10 feet. Or if you're into that sort of thing, 3 meters, roughly.

It goes on to say, *"So he measured the thickness of the wall,"* and this is the wall around the outer wall. It says it was *"one reed; and the height, one reed."* So that means the outer wall. And this is not of the temple. This is of the outer court or the temple precincts, was 10 feet tall and 10 feet wide.

Now the other measurement that you're going to hear a lot in this chapter and the others is that of a cubit, which was just over 20 inches. It was about 20 and a

half inches long, or if you will, 52 centimeters. And you're going to hear about that. So, as we get into now these next verses, we're going to get into some very specific and detailed measurements. And if you're like one of these weird people, I say weird, I just can't follow the stuff in my mind. I really can't. But if you have one of those architectural minds, you might find this fascinating because he is going to give specific details about the size of doorways and the size of the door jam and windows and things like that.

In fact, it is so specific people have sat down to draw or to make models of this temple. And they're able to do it right down to the detail because what God gave Ezekiel was so specific. In fact, I'm going to put a picture of a model of this temple up on the screen for you so you can look at it:



And you know what. We're going to leave this up for probably the duration here because you're going to want to probably glance up at this from time to time as I'm talking about things. But I went ahead and put on here some of the measurements just to remind you that a reed or a rod in the new King James is roughly 10 feet or 3.1 meters. And that one cubit measures 20 and a half inches or 53 centimeters. And that might help you when they talk about these things. And you can kind of do a little quick math in your head, but that's essentially what it looks like right there.

Now, again, none of the temples or temple precincts has actually exactly matched these numbers, these measurements, at least none that has stood thus far. But I have no doubt about the fact that it will stand 1 day.

So reading on, verse 6, *"⁶Then he went into the gateway facing east, going up its steps,"* So you can see right there in the front that there's a stairway or a doorway with stairs leading up. And he says, *"and measured the threshold of the gate, one reed"* (or if you will, 10 feet) *"deep."* And this is the eastern stairway, which ascends up into the temple precincts.

"⁷And the side rooms," (your Bible may say gate chambers. The NIV actually uses the word alcoves) *"one reed long and one reed broad;"* so they were 10 by 10 rooms. And these were either for the guards or the priests and Levites. We're not exactly sure. It says, *"and the space between the side rooms, five cubits; and the threshold of the gate by the vestibule"* (and the NIV instead of vestibule uses the word portico and that means it's a kind of a porch) *"of the gate at the inner end, one reed."* Or if you will, 10 feet.

"⁸Then he measured the vestibule" (or porch or portico) *"of the gateway, on the inside, one reed."* again, 10 feet. *"⁹Then he measured the vestibule of the gateway, eight cubits; and its jambs, two cubits; and the vestibule of the gate was at the inner end. ¹⁰And there were three side rooms on either side of the east gate. The three were of the same size, and the jambs on either side were of the same size. ¹¹Then he measured the width"* (so isn't this crazy? Ezekiel's watching this angel go around measuring things in this temple that doesn't exist yet, but in a vision is completely finished and he's getting all of this information.)

"¹¹Then he measured the width of the opening of the gateway, ten cubits; and the length of the gateway, thirteen cubits. ¹²There was a barrier before the side rooms, one cubit on either side. And the side rooms were six cubits on either side. ¹³Then he measured the gate from the ceiling of the one side room to the ceiling of the other, a breadth of twenty-five cubits; the openings faced each other. ¹⁴He measured also the vestibule, sixty cubits. And around the vestibule of the gateway was the court. ¹⁵From the front of the gate at the entrance to the front of the inner vestibule of the gate was fifty cubits. ¹⁶And the gateway had windows all around, narrowing inwards toward the side rooms and toward their jambs, and likewise the vestibule had windows all around inside, and on the jambs were palm trees." (ESV)

Wow. Incredible. The detail here.

"¹⁷Then he brought me into the outer court. And behold, there were chambers and a pavement, all around the court. Thirty chambers faced the pavement. ¹⁸And the pavement ran along the side of the gates, corresponding to the length of the gates. This was the lower pavement. ¹⁹Then he measured the distance

from the inner front of the lower gate to the outer front of the inner court, a hundred cubits on the east side and on the north side.

²⁰As for the gate that faced toward the north, belonging to the outer court, he measured its length and its breadth. ²¹Its side rooms, three on either side, and its jambs and its vestibule were of the same size as those of the first gate. Its length was fifty cubits, and its breadth twenty-five cubits. ²²And its windows, its vestibule, and its palm trees were of the same size as those of the gate that faced toward the east. And by seven steps people would go up to it, and find its vestibule before them. ²³And opposite the gate on the north, as on the east, was a gate to the inner court. And he measured from gate to gate, a hundred cubits.

²⁴And he led me toward the south, and behold, there was a gate on the south. And he measured its jambs and its vestibule; they had the same size as the others. ²⁵Both it and its vestibule had windows all around, like the windows of the others. Its length was fifty cubits, and its breadth twenty-five cubits. ²⁶And there were seven steps leading up to it, and its vestibule was before them, and it had palm trees on its jambs, one on either side. ²⁷And there was a gate on the south of the inner court. And he measured from gate to gate toward the south, a hundred cubits.

²⁸Then he brought me to the inner court through the south gate, and he measured the south gate. It was of the same size as the others. ²⁹Its side rooms, its jambs, and its vestibule were of the same size as the others, and both it and its vestibule had windows all around. Its length was fifty cubits, and its breadth twenty-five cubits. ³⁰And there were vestibules all around, twenty-five cubits long and five cubits broad. ³¹Its vestibule faced the outer court, and palm trees were on its jambs, and its stairway had eight steps.

³²Then he brought me to the inner court on the east side, and he measured the gate. It was of the same size as the others. ³³Its side rooms, its jambs, and its vestibule were of the same size as the others, and both it and its vestibule had windows all around. Its length was fifty cubits, and its breadth twenty-five cubits. ³⁴Its vestibule faced the outer court, and it had palm trees on its jambs, on either side, and its stairway had eight steps.

³⁵Then he brought me to the north gate, and he measured it. It had the same size as the others. ³⁶Its side rooms, its jambs, and its vestibule were of the same size as the others, and it had windows all around. Its length was fifty cubits, and its breadth twenty-five cubits. ³⁷Its vestibule faced the outer court, and it had palm trees on its jambs, on either side, and its stairway had eight steps.

³⁸There was a chamber with its door in the vestibule of the gate, where the burnt offering was to be washed. ³⁹And in the vestibule of the gate were two tables on either side, on which the burnt offering and the sin offering and the guilt offering were to be slaughtered. ⁴⁰And off to the side, on the outside as one goes up to the entrance of the north gate, were two tables; and off to the other side of the vestibule of the gate were two tables. ⁴¹Four tables were on either side of the gate, eight tables, on which to slaughter. ⁴²And there were four tables of hewn stone for the burnt offering, a cubit and a half long, and a cubit and a half broad, and one cubit high, on which the instruments were to be laid with which the burnt offerings and the sacrifices were slaughtered. ⁴³And hooks, a handbreadth long, were fastened all around within. And on the tables the flesh of the offering was to be laid.

⁴⁴On the outside of the inner gateway there were two chambers in the inner court, one at the side of the north gate facing south, the other at the side of the south gate facing north. ⁴⁵And he said to me, "This chamber that faces south is for the priests who have charge of the temple, ⁴⁶and the chamber that faces north is for the priests who have charge of the altar. These are the sons of Zadok, who alone among the sons of Levi may come near to the LORD to minister to him." ⁴⁷And he measured the court, a hundred cubits long and a hundred cubits broad, a square. And the altar was in front of the temple.

⁴⁸Then he brought me to the vestibule of the temple and measured the jambs of the vestibule, five cubits on either side. And the breadth of the gate was fourteen cubits, and the sidewalls of the gate were three cubits on either side. ⁴⁹The length of the vestibule was twenty cubits, and the breadth twelve cubits, and people would go up to it by ten steps. And there were pillars beside the jambs, one on either side." (ESV)

Do you guys got all that? There's going to be a test. Good grief. I know there are some people who have the gift from God to retain all this stuff. Or not necessarily to retain it, but to figure all this stuff out. I mean it makes sense to some people. We have to remember, too, that when God gave directions to Moses in the wilderness for the building of the tabernacle, He did really the same thing. He gave him very specific measurements and guidelines with which to build the tabernacle. So, God's kind of into this stuff, you know?

Chapter 41, "⁴¹Then he brought me to the nave" (or your Bible may say outer sanctuary, if you have a different translation) "*and measured the jambs. On each side six cubits was the breadth of the jambs.*"

²And the breadth of the entrance was ten cubits, and the sidewalls of the entrance were five cubits on either side. And he measured the length of the nave, forty cubits, and its breadth, twenty cubits. ³Then he went into the inner room and measured the jambs of the entrance, two cubits; and the entrance, six cubits; and the sidewalls on either side of the entrance, seven cubits. ⁴And he measured the length of the room, twenty cubits, and its breadth, twenty cubits, across the nave. And he said to me, "This is the Most Holy Place."

⁵Then he measured the wall of the temple, six cubits thick, and the breadth of the side chambers, four cubits, all around the temple. ⁶And the side chambers were in three stories, one over another, thirty in each story. There were offsets all around the wall of the temple to serve as supports for the side chambers, so that they should not be supported by the wall of the temple. ⁷And it became broader as it wound upward to the side chambers, because the temple was enclosed upward all around the temple. Thus the temple had a broad area upward, and so one went up from the lowest story to the top story through the middle story. ⁸I saw also that the temple had a raised platform all around; the foundations of the side chambers measured a full reed of six long cubits. ⁹The thickness of the outer wall of the side chambers was five cubits. The free space between the side chambers of the temple and the ¹⁰other chambers was a breadth of twenty cubits all around the temple on every side. ¹¹And the doors of the side chambers opened on the free space, one door toward the north, and another door toward the south. And the breadth of the free space was five cubits all around.

¹²The building that was facing the separate yard on the west side was seventy cubits broad, and the wall of the building was five cubits thick all around, and its length ninety cubits.

¹³Then he measured the temple, a hundred cubits long; and the yard and the building with its walls, a hundred cubits long; ¹⁴also the breadth of the east front of the temple and the yard, a hundred cubits.

¹⁵Then he measured the length of the building facing the yard that was at the back and its galleries on either side, a hundred cubits.

The inside of the nave and the vestibules of the court, ¹⁶the thresholds and the narrow windows and the galleries all around the three of them, opposite the threshold, were paneled with wood all around, from the floor up to the windows (now the windows were covered), ¹⁷to the space above the door, even to the inner room, and on the outside. And on all the walls all around, inside and outside, was a measured pattern. ¹⁸It was carved of cherubim and palm trees, a

palm tree between cherub and cherub. Every cherub had two faces: ¹⁹a human face toward the palm tree on the one side, and the face of a young lion toward the palm tree on the other side. They were carved on the whole temple all around. ²⁰From the floor to above the door, cherubim and palm trees were carved; similarly the wall of the nave.

²¹The doorposts of the nave were squared, and in front of the Holy Place was something resembling ²²an altar of wood, three cubits high, two cubits long, and two cubits broad. Its corners, its base, and its walls were of wood. He said to me, "This is the table that is before the LORD." ²³The nave and the Holy Place had each a double door. ²⁴The double doors had two leaves apiece, two swinging leaves for each door. ²⁵And on the doors of the nave were carved cherubim and palm trees, such as were carved on the walls. And there was a canopy of wood in front of the vestibule outside. ²⁶And there were narrow windows and palm trees on either side, on the sidewalls of the vestibule, the side chambers of the temple, and the canopies." (ESV)

Chapter 42:

¹Then he led me out into the outer court, toward the north, and he brought me to the chambers that were opposite the separate yard and opposite the building on the north. ²The length of the building whose door faced north was a hundred cubits, and the breadth fifty cubits. ³Facing the twenty cubits that belonged to the inner court, and facing the pavement that belonged to the outer court, was gallery against gallery in three stories. ⁴And before the chambers was a passage inward, ten cubits wide and a hundred cubits long, and their doors were on the north. ⁵Now the upper chambers were narrower, for the galleries took more away from them than from the lower and middle chambers of the building. ⁶For they were in three stories, and they had no pillars like the pillars of the courts. Thus the upper chambers were set back from the ground more than the lower and the middle ones. ⁷And there was a wall outside parallel to the chambers, toward the outer court, opposite the chambers, fifty cubits long. ⁸For the chambers on the outer court were fifty cubits long, while those opposite the nave were a hundred cubits long. ⁹Below these chambers was an entrance on the east side, as one enters them from the outer court.

¹⁰In the thickness of the wall of the court, on the south also, opposite the yard and opposite the building, there were chambers ¹¹with a passage in front of them. They were similar to the chambers on the north, of the same length and breadth, with the same exits and arrangements and doors, ¹²as were the entrances of the chambers on the south. There was an entrance at the beginning

of the passage, the passage before the corresponding wall on the east as one enters them.

¹³Then he said to me, "The north chambers and the south chambers opposite the yard are the holy chambers, where the priests who approach the LORD shall eat the most holy offerings. There they shall put the most holy offerings—the grain offering, the sin offering, and the guilt offering—for the place is holy.

¹⁴When the priests enter the Holy Place, they shall not go out of it into the outer court without laying there the garments in which they minister, for these are holy. They shall put on other garments before they go near to that which is for the people."

¹⁵Now when he had finished measuring the interior of the temple area, he led me out by the gate that faced east, and measured the temple area all around.

¹⁶He measured the east side with the measuring reed, 500 cubits by the measuring reed all around. ¹⁷He measured the north side, 500 cubits by the measuring reed all around. ¹⁸He measured the south side, 500 cubits by the measuring reed. ¹⁹Then he turned to the west side and measured, 500 cubits by the measuring reed. ²⁰He measured it on the four sides. It had a wall around it, 500 cubits long and 500 cubits broad, to make a separation between the holy and the common." (ESV)

Chapter 43:

¹Then he led me to the gate, the gate facing east. ²And behold, the glory of the God of Israel was coming from the east. And the sound of his coming was like the sound of many waters, and the earth shone with his glory. ³And the vision I saw was just like the vision that I had seen when he came to destroy the city, and just like the vision that I had seen by the Chebar canal. And I fell on my face. ⁴As the glory of the LORD entered the temple by the gate facing east, ⁵the Spirit lifted me up and brought me into the inner court; and behold, the glory of the LORD filled the temple.

⁶While the man was standing beside me, I heard one speaking to me out of the temple, ⁷and he said to me, "Son of man, this is the place of my throne and the place of the soles of my feet, where I will dwell in the midst of the people of Israel forever. And the house of Israel shall no more defile my holy name, neither they, nor their kings, by their whoring and by the dead bodies of their kings at their high places, ⁸by setting their threshold by my threshold and their doorposts beside my doorposts, with only a wall between me and them. They have defiled my holy name by their abominations that they have committed, so I have consumed them in my anger. ⁹Now let them put away their whoring and

the dead bodies of their kings far from me, and I will dwell in their midst forever.

¹⁰As for you, son of man, describe to the house of Israel the temple, that they may be ashamed of their iniquities; and they shall measure the plan. ¹¹And if they are ashamed of all that they have done, make known to them the design of the temple, its arrangement, its exits and its entrances, that is, its whole design; and make known to them as well all its statutes and its whole design and all its laws, and write it down in their sight, so that they may observe all its laws and all its statutes and carry them out. ¹²This is the law of the temple: the whole territory on the top of the mountain all around shall be most holy. Behold, this is the law of the temple.

¹³These are the measurements of the altar by cubits (the cubit being a cubit and a handbreadth): its base shall be one cubit high and one cubit broad, with a rim of one span around its edge. And this shall be the height of the altar: ¹⁴from the base on the ground to the lower ledge, two cubits, with a breadth of one cubit; and from the smaller ledge to the larger ledge, four cubits, with a breadth of one cubit; ¹⁵and the altar hearth, four cubits; and from the altar hearth projecting upward, four horns. ¹⁶The altar hearth shall be square, twelve cubits long by twelve broad. ¹⁷The ledge also shall be square, fourteen cubits long by fourteen broad, with a rim around it half a cubit broad, and its base one cubit all around. The steps of the altar shall face east."

¹⁸And he said to me, "Son of man, thus says the Lord GOD: These are the ordinances for the altar: On the day when it is erected for offering burnt offerings upon it and for throwing blood against it, ¹⁹you shall give to the Levitical priests of the family of Zadok, who draw near to me to minister to me, declares the Lord GOD, a bull from the herd for a sin offering. ²⁰And you shall take some of its blood and put it on the four horns of the altar and on the four corners of the ledge and upon the rim all around. Thus you shall purify the altar and make atonement for it. ²¹You shall also take the bull of the sin offering, and it shall be burned in the appointed place belonging to the temple, outside the sacred area. ²²And on the second day you shall offer a male goat without blemish for a sin offering; and the altar shall be purified, as it was purified with the bull. ²³When you have finished purifying it, you shall offer a bull from the herd without blemish and a ram from the flock without blemish. ²⁴You shall present them before the LORD, and the priests shall sprinkle salt on them and offer them up as a burnt offering to the LORD. ²⁵For seven days you shall provide daily a male goat for a sin offering; also, a bull from the herd and a ram from the flock, without blemish, shall be provided. ²⁶Seven days shall they make atonement for the altar and cleanse it, and so consecrate it. ²⁷And when

they have completed these days, then from the eighth day onward the priests shall offer on the altar your burnt offerings and your peace offerings, and I will accept you, declares the Lord GOD"" (ESV)

So you can see these are challenging chapters. And as I told you at the outset, not a whole lot of devotional content here. These are not verses you're going to put up on your fridge and say, man, these verses just really bring me comfort. This is instructions for the Israelites for a day that is obviously yet to come. One of the ways we know that it is yet to come is because the Lord says, I am going to dwell among my people here forever and no more shall they defile my name.

So that is language that is very common to the millennial kingdom. And so, it is my personal belief, although I will admit that there are issues, it is my personal belief that this is referring to a millennial temple. And that the sacrifices that are going on are done as memorial offerings, not sacrifices for the taking away of sin.

So, we're going to stop there for tonight. And we'll probably finish out the book of Ezekiel next week. I'm just kind of guessing, but we're going to give it the old college try. We'll see how it goes.

Let's pray. Father, thank you so much for giving us this time. Thank you for the blessing, the richness of your love. Thank you for your word, Lord. Even, you know, when we come upon passages in the Bible for which we really don't have a strong explanation. When we read things in the word, when we think about even who you are, when we think about your nature, the fact that you are, you have revealed yourself as one God in three persons. Or when we think about you as a God without beginning and without ending. When we think, Lord, about the fact that you are everywhere present at the same time. That you know all things. That you are completely self sufficient. Lord, we don't grasp these things.

We can know that they are. But we cannot know how they are. And in like manner, we come upon some chapters, Lord, in your scripture that have yet to be made clear. And these are some. But we know, Lord God, that you are always true to your word. And that there will come a day when we will be given full understanding and we will know what these chapters are about.

And we will know how they fit into your redemptive plan and your purpose for Israel and for the church. And we thank you for that, Lord. We take great comfort knowing that you are a God who has all things worked out in the

perfection of your plan. And that includes our own lives. And we thank you, Father, for that.

We thank you that you are the Lord of our lives. And that you hold us in the palm of your hand. Lord, in these dark days, we pray that you'd strengthen your church to be light, to be salt, to share the good news of Jesus Christ's death, burial, and resurrection that men might have hope. We thank you, Father, for giving us this time.

We ask your rich blessing upon the remainder of our evening. And we ask it in the name of Jesus, our Savior, amen.