

22T12c Ezekiel's Temple Part 1

Hello my friends. Thanks for joining me @ the PUNLA coffee table. I just have to say it. I don't really like eschatology or end times theology. I always figured it was going to happen so why worry about it. I would say things like, it does not help me follow Jesus, it does not help me reach others for Jesus, then why. What's the point? And this is true.

And I still kind of feel this way but over recent years, this topic keeps coming up over and over and over again. I think Jesus is trying to tell me something. So, I'm trying to be obedient and study the word of God as Jesus wants me to, not as I would like to do it.

Anyway, here we are talking eschatology again. This time Ezekiel Chapters 40-48. This is commonly called Ezekiel's Temple. This vision or this series of visions, Ezekiel had while in captivity in Babylon. People argue about the exact dates Ezekiel had these visions. Ezekiel says in the 25th year of captivity or about 573BC. People have fought about the interpretation of this for generations. And even today, the interpretation of this prophecy is very hotly contested. Some Christian interpretations of Ezekiel's temple are: It is the temple that Zerubbabel should have built after the return from captivity; It is Herod's Temple from the time of Jesus; A literal temple to be rebuilt either prior to the tribulation or during the millennial reign of Christ, A symbolic temple which is symbolic of the worship of God by the Christian church today, or a symbol of the future and eternal reign of God or even a foreshadowing for the first advent of Jesus.

Let us pray.

Heavenly Father. Thank you for your good news. Lord use me to share your message. If I say something in error, please let them remember what you wanted them to hear, not my errand words. Help us not to be confused by the many voices and opinions we hear. May we stay focused on your word Lord. Guide our discussion. We pay in your name Lord Jesus, Amen.

So, okay which of these interpretations is correct. I have no idea and neither does anyone else. One thing for certain, not understanding this is no big deal. It does not affect your relationship with Jesus, it does not help you be a better follower of Jesus, and it probably won't help you reach others for Jesus. So why study this. Well it's in the bible so God thought it was important. So Why, why is this vision in the bible at all.

I think we need to step back a little to get a better view so to speak. Who was Ezekiel? Ezekiel, whose name means "strengthened by God," grew up in Jerusalem, many believe he served as a priest in the temple and Ezekiel was among the second group of captives taken to Babylon along with King Jehoiachin. While in Babylon he became a prophet of God. But what was the purpose of Ezekiel being a prophet, who was his audience and what was the reason for God having him give his messages and object lessons. Well we don't need to guess, Ezekiel 2:3 (NAS) tells us, *Then He said to me, "Son of man, I am sending you to the sons of Israel, to a rebellious people who have rebelled against Me; they and their fathers have revolted against Me to this very day.*

God is sending Ezekiel to the sons of Israel. He was called to proclaim God's messages to the exiles from Judah in Babylon, probably to the people he was living near while in exile. So who was the audience for the Temple vision? Again, we don't need to guess, Ezekiel 40:4 (NAS) *And the man said to me, "Son of man, see with your eyes, hear with your ears, and pay attention to all that I am going to show you; for you have been brought here in order to show it to you. Declare to the house of Israel all that you see."*

So, the audience for these visions was meant to be people Ezekiel was able to speak to. That's pretty obvious from the text, no real reason to argue about this. Most likely Ezekiel was speaking to the exiles from Israel living in Babylon with him. It is possible Ezekiel could have had messages sent to other Jews scattered among the nations or even those still living in Judah. We know Jeremiah was still in Jerusalem and Ezekiel references Jeremiah at least once. But I could find no reference to Ezekiel in the writings of Jeremiah. It could be in there but it would have been difficult for Ezekiel to send a message to Jerusalem. There are many reasons for this but I don't want to get too far off our topic today.

So whatever this vision was, it was intended for the house of Israel of Ezekiel's time just like every other vision and message recorded in the book of Ezekiel. Most of Ezekiel's visions are taking place back in Israel as he is sharing them with the exiles or if they have not happened yet, they will happen in the near history. In fact almost all of Ezekiel's visions can be linked to events that people he was living with could have seen or their children could have seen or at least heard news about. The Big exception to this may be this series of visions we are talking about today. Regardless, this vision or visions was meant for the people in exile probably to be an encouragement to them. I don't think anyone would disagree with that.

Okay, like I said no one can be sure about the interpretation of this vision or visions. Every theory has sections which just don't quite fit the text. So, if we start there, understanding there are no clear theories, where do we go now.

I want to test a couple theories against the text. First, I want to separate this into two major sections. Ezekiel 40-43 "the New Temple" and Ezekiel 44-48 "the New Worship/Restored Land". And I know people will argue about this also. But for today, let's focus on the "New Temple" portion from Ezekiel 40-43. We will talk about Ezekiel 44-48 another time.

Now, I'm an engineer so I see things spatially and size shape magnitude of things matter. First what is a cubit. Well a cubit is very simply the length from elbow to wrist. Sounds simple but of course whose elbow and wrist. And this is why it gets confusing. It depends on who was King, or who defined it and it changed over time. And we have references to standard cubit and long cubit etc. So how long was a cubit you might ask? Somewhere between 16 inches and 21 inches as best as we can guess. My guess is a standard cubit was about 18 inches or 1.5 feet and a long cubit was more like 20 inches plus or minus. So why is this important.

Ezekiel 40:1-4 (NAS) *In the twenty-fifth year of our exile, at the beginning of the year, on the tenth of the month, in the fourteenth year after the city was taken, on this very day the hand of the LORD was upon me and He brought me there. In the visions of God He brought me into the land of Israel and set me on a very high mountain, and on it to the south there was something like a structure of a city. So He brought me there; and behold, there was a man whose appearance was like the appearance of bronze, with a thread of flax and a measuring rod in his hand; and he was standing in the gateway. And the man said to me, "Son of man, see with your eyes, hear with your ears, and pay attention to all that I am going to show you; for you have been brought here in order to show it to you. Declare to the house of Israel all that you see."*

So, there are a couple things here. Ezekiel clearly states when he had this vision. He is taken to a high mountain in the land of Israel. The highest mountain in Israel is Mount Tabor just south and west of the sea of Galilee. And Ezekiel sees something to the south "something like a structure of a city". This is a very odd way to say this and I don't think we should ignore this. Ezekiel does not say I saw a city or I saw Jerusalem. He saw something like a structure of a city. Literal or figuratively we cannot tell.

Next Ezekiel was brought there, wherever there is. I'm guessing he is now standing in front of this "something like a structure of the city" but it is unclear. What is clear is we are going to be measuring something. The Man or angel is holding a builder's tool set, a thread of flax much like our tape measures of today, and a measuring rod or reed depending on your translations. Either way this is a measuring stick, very similar to our yard sticks except it is much longer. Ezekiel 40:5 (NAS) says, *And behold, there was a wall on the outside of the temple all around, and in the man's hand was a measuring rod of six cubits, each of which was a cubit and a hand width. So he measured the thickness of the wall, one rod; and the height, one rod.*

So the measuring rod is 6 long cubits in length or about 120 inches or about ten feet, it could be shorter like nine feet or so. For us today, it does not matter the exact length, we can just imagine it is around 10 feet so to make it is easy to visualize in our minds. For those of you that use meters, think of it as about 3 meter long stick.

So throughout the next two chapters, Ezekiel measures the buildings, courtyards inner and outer in detail. This is like a blueprint of this New Temple. Gate sizes, Tables, pillars, how many stories tall, rooms, guard posts. It is very detailed and you can if you are careful lay out a blueprint design from these and many have tried to do so over the years. I bet if you have a study bible or commentary, they have a picture of Ezekiel's Temple.

I had always been told that this Temple Ezekiel saw was huge, dwarfing all previous temples. And it is true that the size is significantly larger than Solomon's temple which had either just been destroyed or would be destroyed in the near history. But was this a gigantic structure. I've attached several artists depictions on our website post. You can see the outer courtyard measured around 750 ft square. Or for my American audience it's about 10 football fields or for you soccer or I'm sorry "real football" fans. It's about five soccer pitches. That's not exact but you can get the idea. It's big but it's not that big. Many of our cities have areas, with multiple soccer fields or baseball diamonds that are larger than this area. So, yes, it's big but not gigantic. An obvious question is how big was Zerubbabel's temple which was rebuilt after the exiles returned to Jerusalem. We don't know or at least I don't know. There are references to it in Ezra 5:2 and Zechariah 4:9. It was probably not very impressive and most likely nothing like what Ezekiel saw. So what about Herod's remodel of the Temple. History records that Herod intended to build the Temple Mount to a gigantic 1600ft by 900ft which would have been larger than Ezekiel's Temple footprint. And in reality, we don't know exactly but archeology and some historical accounts give us a glimpse at how big it was. As best as I could find, Herod's temple area was about 17 acres or roughly 10 football fields or 5 soccer pitches. Remarkably close to the size of Ezekiel's temple. Now of course we don't know if the details matched but whether they did or not, it appears the size of Ezekiel's temple and the Temple of Jesus' day were about the same size.

So I know some of you are going to say what about the dimensions from Ezekiel 45, well this is the land and city allotments not the temple, so let's leave that for next time.

Let us pray.

Heavenly Father. Thank you for your good news. Thank you for your word the Bible. Thank you for giving us the tools and historical accounts, the archeology, the science, so we can better understand your message for us. Help us to listen to you as we study and research your word. Help us not to be confused by the many voices and opinions we hear. May we stay focused on

your word Lord. Thank you, Jesus, for what you did for me or all of us. We pay in your name Lord Jesus, Amen.

So, it is possible that this vision of the of the Temple that Ezekiel had was fulfilled by history by the time Jesus walked the earth. Or it could be the temple that should have been built. It is possible. And of course it is possible all of this is just symbolic only. Ezekiel 43 talks about God's glory filling the Temple, sacrifices and offerings just like the original temple and as the temple in Jesus' time was used.

In fact, the descriptions of sacrifices and offerings has always bothered me, if I'm to believe this is the future Temple. Why sacrifices? Didn't Jesus put an end to the need for sacrifices when He died on the cross and rose from the dead? In fact, if this is about a future Temple, then several new testament scriptures would no longer make any sense, for example Hebrews 8:8-10 (Sacrifice of Christ ended need for sacrifices and offering), Revelation 21:22-27 (no temple in the future heavenly city), Galatians 3:28 & Ephesians 2:12-22 (Gentiles and Jews are one in Jesus) and other scriptures.

So yes, I believe Jesus once and for all time ended the need for sacrifices, with His atoning death on the cross. So why would a future temple need sacrifices? Well, this only makes sense if this temple is prior to Jesus and the cross. I'm actually very relieved that what this vision represents, could have been fulfilled in history, or should have been fulfilled in history. If the sacrifices are literal, then it just makes more sense that it is pre-Jesus with all the offering and sacrifices. Of course it could be symbolic of Jesus or worship of Jesus, but no one can prove that either.

Thank you for joining me @ the PUNLA Coffee Table. If you liked the message, please click like. And Please Subscribe to our channel. Leave comments here, or our website or mail me. I want your feedback so let me know what you think.

See you next time @ the PUNLA Coffee Table. God bless.

Here are a few links with similar interpretations. I am not endorsing these only sharing them as part of my research on this topic

[\(10\) Ezekiel Temple Vision - Chapter 40 - 3D Animation - YouTube](#)

[\(10\) Ezekiel Temple Vision - Chapter 42 and 43 - 3D Animation - YouTube](#)

https://youtu.be/SDeCWW_Bnyw

[\(10\) Overview: Ezekiel 34-48 - YouTube](#)

[Ezekiel 40-41 « \(ybfree.org\)](#)

[Part 1: Lost and Found in the Temple — Ezekiel's Temple \(ezekielstemple.com\)](#)

[The Temple Mount in the Herodian Period \(37 BC–70 A.D.\) - Biblical Archaeology Society](#)

[Temple Sizes Compared – bigger than a football field – Footprints of God](#)

[\(footprintsofgodpilgrimages.com\)](#)

[Locating Solomon's Temple -chapter One \(templemountlocation.com\)](#)

[Ezra's Temple, Herod's Temple and Ezekiel's vision of the Third Temple \(jewishmag.com\)](#)