

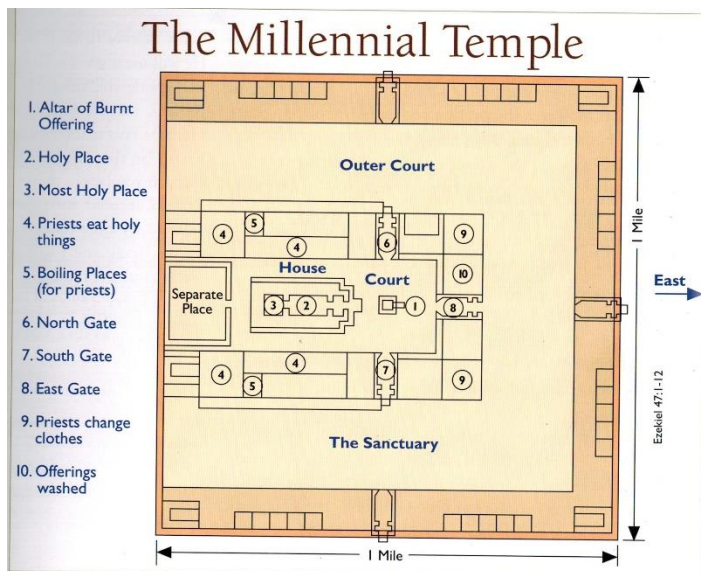
Millennial Temple

(29) Ezekiel 40:1–48:35

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Ezekiel 40 – Measuring the New Temple

v1 – *In the twenty-fifth year of our captivity:* These visions were given to the prophet some twelve years after the latest of those already considered.

v3 – *There was a man whose appearance was like the appearance of bronze:* This **man** was likely an angelic being, indicated by his radiant appearance (**bronze**).

v4 – *Declare to the house of Israel everything you see:* The Millennium is only a beginning, sort of a microcosm, of the eternal state and a transition into it.

What is the significance of the gateway facing east?

v6 – *Then he went to the gateway which faced east:* It is significant that the entrance into the temple is from the east, since it was toward the east that God left the temple according to Ezekiel 11:23.

Why is there no mention of a Court of the Gentiles or Court of the Women?

v28 – *He brought me to the inner court:* There is no mention made of a specific court of the Gentiles or court of the women.

- It will not have a court of the Gentiles with the all-important separating wall (Ephesians 2:14) nor will it have a separate court of the women. In the millennial temple, our Lord's desire will be fulfilled that His house be a house of prayer for men and women of all nations (Mark 11:17; Isaiah 56:7; Jeremiah 7:11).

v39 – *In the vestibule of the gateway were two tables on this side and two tables on that side, on which to slay the burnt offering, the sin offering, and the trespass offering.* It is not necessary that the emphasis of each of these offerings be for the atonement of sin. Though they sometimes had that association, they also were used with the emphasis of *consecration* and *purification*.

Why would there still be sacrifices in light of the finished work of Jesus Christ on the cross?

These may be regarded as *memorials* pointing back to the work of Jesus.

- Animal sacrifices were *never* actually effective for the cleansing of sin, only as representations and shadows of the future reality fulfilled by Jesus the Messiah in His crucifixion.
- Much as the bread and the cup of the Lord's Table is a powerful spiritual representation and memorial of Jesus' work on the cross, these sacrifices can be regarded in a similar way.

It is important to observe that millennial sacrifices are discussed elsewhere in the OT prophets (Isaiah 56:5–7; 60:7, 13; 66:20–23; Jeremiah 33:15–22; Zechariah 14:16–21). The concept is not unique to Ezekiel.

What is the significance of there being singers at the Temple?

v44 – *The chambers for the singers in the inner court:* In Ezekiel's temple, the priests (or Levites) served not only in the administration of sacrifice, but also in the leading of music for worship and praise of God.

v45 – *Priests who have charge of the temple:* In addition to the **singers**, there were also those who guarded and looked over the temple and its administration.

v46 – *Priests who have charge of the altar*: A third category of workers were those who conducted sacrifice. *These are the sons of Zadok*, descended from that high priest, who served the people but whose chief job was *come near to the Lord to minister to Him*.

- The name Zadok means ‘righteous,’ and here the Prophet Ezekiel emphasizes separation and holiness.

What does it tell us that there is so much detail describing the Millennial Temple?

That this prophecy will be fulfilled literally. All this detail does not leave open the possibility that this description should be taken as an allegory for something else (though many liberal theologians who generally regard prophecy from a preterist perspective attempt to).

Ezekiel 41 – Features of the New Temple

v18 – *It was made with cherubim and palm trees*: The design of **palm trees** has been frequently noted before in Ezekiel’s temple, and was also noted Solomon’s temple (1 Kings 6:29-35). The design of **cherubim** was prominent in both the previous tabernacle and temple (Exodus 25:18-22 and 26:1; 1 Kings 6:23-35).

- In these figures aspirations of life and prosperity (palm) and security (cherubim) coalesce.

v19 – *Each cherub had two faces...the face of a man...and the face of a young lion*: We learn from Ezekiel 10:14 (and Revelation 4:7) that cherubim have four faces. Here, two of the four faces are noted and depicted in the design.

Why were a man and lion chosen for the cherubim?

Perhaps this suggested perfect realization of created life, and its perfect exercise in kingly dominion.

Ezekiel 42 – The Chambers for the Priests

The Temple complex will occupy about a square mile; how does that compare with the previous temples?

v16 – *Five hundred rods by the measuring rod all around*: The entire area was much too large for Mount Moriah where Solomon’s and Zerubbabel’s temples stood (maximum size of temple mount is 1600 x 900 feet). The description of this temple requires a great change in the topography of the land which will occur...

Zechariah 14:9-10 – And the Lord shall be King over all the earth... All the land shall be turned into a plain from Geba to Rimmon south of Jerusalem. Jerusalem shall be raised up and inhabited in her place...

Why will the Millennial Temple need a wall?

v20 – *To separate the holy areas from the common*: The purpose of the wall around the temple compound was to communicate the principle of God’s holiness, as separated from that which is **common**.

- In Ezekiel’s temple there is no dividing line between Jew and Gentile or men and women; the dividing line is between what is holy and what is profane (or common).

Why will the New Jerusalem of the Eternal State need a wall? (see Revelation 21:12)

A wall provides security... in this case it is symbolic of security. And as with the Millennial Temple wall, it is a reminder of the separation of the holy from the unholy.

Ezekiel 43 – The Temple, the Lord’s Dwelling Place

v2 – *the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the east*: From the same directly Ezekiel saw God’s glory depart (Ezekiel 11:23), so now in his vision he saw it come to this new temple.

What do you think Ezekiel saw that he described as the glory of the Lord?

It is hard to *define* the glory of God; we could call it the radiant outshining of His character and presence. The Bible says that God’s glory radiates throughout all His creation (Psalm 19:1-4). Yet there is also the concept of the visible, tangible glory of God – the *shekinah* – and this is scattered about the Old Testament. In many cases it is described as a cloud.

Where else in Scripture has the shekinah glory of God put in an appearance?

- This is the cloud that stood by Israel in the wilderness (Exodus 13:21-22).
- This is the cloud of glory that God spoke to Israel from (Exodus 16:10).
- This is the cloud from which God met with Moses and others (Exodus 19:9, 24:15-18, Numbers 11:25, 12:5, 16:42).
- This is the cloud that stood by the door of the Tabernacle (Exodus 33:9-10).
- This is the cloud from which God appeared to the High Priest in the Holy Place inside the veil (Leviticus 16:2).
- This is the cloud of Ezekiel’s vision, filling the temple of God with the brightness of His glory (Ezekiel 10:4).
- This is the cloud of glory that overshadowed Mary when she conceived Jesus by the power of the Holy Spirit (Luke 1:35).

- This is the cloud present at the transfiguration of Jesus (Luke 9:34-35).
- This is the cloud of glory that received Jesus into heaven at His ascension (Acts 1:9).
- This is the cloud that will display the glory of Jesus Christ when He returns in triumph to this earth (Luke 21:27, Revelation 1:7).

When Moses dedicated the tabernacle (Exodus 40) and Solomon the temple (2 Chronicles 5:11–14), the glory of God moved in, signifying that the Lord had accepted their worship and approved of their work.

- The Shekinah glory is never mentioned in connection with the restoration (Zerubbabel's) temple, so that temple certainly cannot be the fulfillment of what is predicted here.

v7 – *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 children of Israel forever.*

God proclaimed that He would come back to the temple to reign, and it is also where He would abide.

How is it the Messiah would abide in the temple forever since He will be in the New Jerusalem during the Eternal State?

The point is that He would abide in the midst of His people. There will be no temple during the Eternal State because the presence of the Triune Godhead in the New Jerusalem is the temple (Revelation 21:22).

v13 – *These are the measurements of the altar:* The dimensions show that the altar was large, and also tall, with estimates of its height from 12-20 feet.

Ezekiel 44 – The East Gate and the Prince

v2 – *This gate shall be shut:*

The East gate was **shut** and **no man shall enter by it because the Lord God of Israel has entered by it**. It was a gate especially reserved for God Himself. It was separated for God's use alone.

Who is this prince that will have special privileges in the Temple?

v3 – *As for the prince, because he is the prince, he may sit in it to eat bread before the Lord; he shall enter by way of the vestibule of the gateway, and go out the same way.*

Ezekiel wrote of a ruler, a *prince*, who would have special privilege regarding the gate.

- This ruler is likely David, whose future ruler over Israel was mentioned several times in Ezekiel (Ezekiel

34:23-25 and 37:25) and elsewhere (Isaiah 55:3-4, Jeremiah 30:8-9, Hosea 3:5).

- In Ezekiel 37:25 it was specifically written that David would be *prince* over Israel.
- The fact that the prince must offer a sin offering (Ezekiel 45:22) and has sons (Ezekiel 46:16) means it is unlikely that the prince is Jesus Messiah.
- The prince, Messiah's representative, will have the privilege of sitting in the very gate where the Lord Himself will have entered. He will perform certain religious acts in the presence of the Lord.

Who will not be permitted to visit the Millennial Temple?

v7 – *When you brought in foreigners, uncircumcised in heart and uncircumcised in flesh:* In the past they were disobedient by bringing in **foreigners** – those who had *not* accepted the covenant God made with Israel – and allowed them to serve in the temple.

- This had been the sin of the past, and must not be repeated.
- God promised that in His future temple there would be a true separation and those not in covenant could not even **enter** His **sanctuary**.

v10 – *The Levites who went far from Me:* God now spoke to the **Levites**, those who **strayed** from Yahweh along with the rest of Israel, going **after their idols**. This was true of the Levites of Ezekiel's day, now in their exile.

v11 – *Yet they shall be ministers in My sanctuary:* God promised a future restoration of the Levites who previously went astray. In the restoration of Ezekiel's temple, they would be **gatekeepers** and servants (**ministers**) of the temple.

v15 – *But the priests, the Levites, the sons of Zadok:* Now God spoke to the **sons of Zadok**. The **sons of Zadok** were of the tribe of Levi (**the Levites**) and were of the family of Aaron (**the priests**). Zadok received the right to the priesthood in the days of Solomon (1 Kings 2:35). They were not like the other Levites in general, being noted for their faithfulness (*who kept charge of My sanctuary when the children of Israel went astray from Me*).

- The new priesthood is confined to the line of Zadok, who was a descendant of Eleazar, the third son of Aaron. Representatives of this line had evidently stood firm.
- Zadok was of the line of Eleazar (2 Sam. 8:17; 1 Chron. 6:7-8). He was faithful to David during the insurrection of Absalom (2 Sam 15:24 ff.), and anointed Solomon as king after the abortive attempt of Adonijah to seize the throne (1 Kings 1:32 ff.).

Who are the priests today?

1 Peter 2:5 – *you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.*

During the Church Age, all followers of Jesus Christ are priests called to make disciples and intercede with God on behalf of others.

What principles of the following priestly requirements apply to believers today?

v20 – *They shall keep their hair well trimmed:* Their hair was not to be shaved, but their hair was not to be **long**. They were to avoid extremes in either way...

1 Corinthians 9:19-22 – *For though I am free from all men, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win the more; and to the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might win Jews; to those who are under the law, as under the law, that I might win those who are under the law; to those who are without law, as without law (not being without law toward God, but under law toward Christ), that I might win those who are without law; to the weak I became as weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all men, that I might by all means save some.*

Essentially Paul was saying, when in Rome, be as a Roman. Be someone that is easy to connect with, not someone that stands out in a crowd which can be distracting and even intimidating.

v21 – *No priest shall drink wine when he enters the inner court:* They were not to be under the influence of even the relatively mild wine of that day. This prohibition is in agreement with the Mosaic Law concerning the conduct of priests...

Leviticus 10:9 – *Do not drink wine or intoxicating drink, you, nor your sons with you, when you go into the tabernacle of meeting, lest you die*

Going before God requires sober-mindedness:

1 Peter 4:7 – *The end of all things is at hand; therefore be self-controlled and sober-minded for the sake of your prayers.* (ESV)

It is also important to be sober-minded in times of fellowship:

Romans 14:21 – *It is good neither to eat meat nor drink wine nor do anything by which your brother stumbles or is offended or is made weak*

v22 – *They shall not take as wife a widow or divorced woman:* The sons of Zadok in the days of Ezekiel's temple were also to observe the marriage regulations relevant to

the priests of Israel. God holds marriage in high regard so we should as well...

Mark 10:6-9 – *From the beginning of the creation, God 'made them male and female. For this reason, a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh; so, then they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore, what God has joined together, let not man separate.*

v23 – *They shall teach My people the difference between the holy and the unholy:* This was one of fundamental duties of the priests of Israel. They were by both instruction and example to teach Israel the difference *between the unclean and the clean*. Today, that is what is of God and what is not of God...

Matthew 28:19-20 – *Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you*

v24 – *In controversy they shall stand as judges:* The priests of ancient Israel could also serve as judges or mediators. This was because they were supposed to be well versed in the **laws** and **statutes** of God, and able to apply them in given situations. In this age, there should be no litigation between Christian brothers...

1 Corinthians 6:4-5 – *If then you have judgments concerning things pertaining to this life, do you appoint those who are least esteemed by the church to judge? I say this to your shame. Is it so, that there is not a wise man among you, not even one, who will be able to judge between his brethren?*

v25 – *They shall not defile themselves by coming near a dead person:* As was true of the priests commanded by Moses, so it was to be of the priests in the time of Ezekiel's temple. They were to avoid dead bodies and carcasses. Theirs was to be a ministry of *life*, not death. Likewise, Christians should support life opposing abortion and euthanasia...

2 Corinthians 2:14 – *Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness?*

Our closest friends should be fellow believers. Jesus had this to say about prioritizing fellowship with unbelievers ahead of God's purposes...

Luke 9:60 – *Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and preach the kingdom of God*

Ezekiel 45 – Regarding the Priests

v1 – *You shall set apart*: The division of the land among the various tribes is the subject of Ezekiel 47–48. Here the text deals with only one part of the land: the location of the temple and the holy city. This land belongs directly to the Lord, while the rest of the land is the inheritance of the tribes.

v4 – *Belonging to the priests, the ministers of the sanctuary*: The land belonging to God directly is approximately 64 square miles. Three parts comprise this area. The northernmost portion comprising some 25 square miles belonged to the Levites. Next came a strip of the same size that was available to the priests. It also was the site of the sanctuary. The last strip, which was about 13 square miles, was for the city itself. The land to the east and west of this sacral land was for the prince. The rest of the land of Israel belonged to the tribes.

What principle for princes will the Lord enforce during the Millennial Kingdom?

v8 – *My princes shall no longer oppress My people*: The period of time connected to Ezekiel’s temple would be a time of righteousness and right rule among God’s leaders.

- That vision of a future righteousness could inspire the leaders (**princes**) of Ezekiel’s to **remove violence and plundering, execute justice and righteousness, and stop dispossessing** God’s people in their own day.

Why are honest scales mentioned here in regards to the Millennial Kingdom princes?

v10 – *You shall have honest scales*: There will be commerce during the Millennial Kingdom. And God cares greatly about simple integrity among men. **Scales** and every **measure** should be righteous and fair.

How do the princes of the world oppress people today?

Freedom killing mandates, oppressive taxes (adding a per-mile tax), business stifling regulations, cronyism, making people dependents of the government, causing divisions between races and vaccine status.

Who will be the princes of the Millennial Kingdom?

While Israel is an exception for obvious reasons, God will likely raise up mortals to fill princely roles in other nations and governmental entities. But there will not be demons to tempt them to oppress people as there is during this age. Since Jesus promised Church Age saints that we will rule with Him, it is likely resurrected Church Age saints will serve as counselors and spiritual advisors to the mortal princes.

v20 – *And so you shall do on the seventh day of the month for everyone who has sinned unintentionally or in ignorance. Thus you shall make atonement for the temple.* These were the memorial sacrifices to recognize the ongoing need for cleansing and the separation between the holy and the profane.

- There is no special Day of Atonement in the Millennial Kingdom. That feast day has been once and for all made unnecessary in the atonement provided by Christ on the cross.

v21 – *You shall observe the Passover*: Among the feasts celebrated at Ezekiel’s future temple will be **Passover**. God’s redemption of Israel from Egypt and His greater redemption through the work of Jesus on the cross will always be remembered.

Ezekiel 46 – Worship at the temple

v9 – *when the people of the land come before the Lord on the appointed feast days, whoever enters by way of the north gate to worship shall go out by way of the south gate* There would be an established flow of traffic for **the people of the land** as they came to worship at Ezekiel’s future temple.

v10 – *The prince shall be in their midst*: God’s appointed ruler for Israel in the millennium will be a leader truly *among* the people. The prince will not isolate himself from the people on the feast days but be a part of the crowd.

v13 – *You shall daily make a burnt offering to the Lord*: In Ezekiel’s future temple, there would be daily offerings to remember and memorialize the perfect work of Jesus’ sacrifice at the cross.

Why would there be kitchens in the Millennial Temple?

v24 – *These are the kitchens*: There were specific places for the preparation of the sacrificial meals associated with the **sacrifices of the people**. The sacrificial meals were an important part of the offerings made, an act of fellowship not only among men, but also symbolically between God and man.

- The worship that went on in the temple was not confined to word and gesture. It included the eating and the experience of fellowship that comes from sharing a meal.

Ezekiel 47 – The River of Life

V1 – *There was water, flowing from under the threshold of the temple:* Ezekiel saw something that never existed in the temple before: a river flowing directly from the temple.

Psalm 46:4 – *There is a river whose streams shall make glad the city of God.*

What does this river in the Millennial Temple bring to mind?

John mentioned a *similar* river relevant to the eternal state in Revelation. God is the source of both rivers; but Ezekiel saw the river issuing from the temple, whereas John saw the river coming from the throne of God and of the Lamb (a temple not existing according to Revelation 21:22).

What is the significance of the river increasing its flow as it gets further from the Temple?

v3-5 – *The water came up to my knees... up to my waist:* This rapid increase in depth – from small trickle of a stream to ankle depth, to knee depth, to waist depth, all in the course of about a mile (or 1.5 kilometers) – is *miraculous*. Eventually, all Ezekiel could do is swim (v5).

- We read nothing of other streams leading into this; it is a miraculous and abundant provision.

v8 – *When it reaches the sea, its waters are healed:* Ezekiel's guide described the miraculous properties of this river. As the river flowed out from Jerusalem then down into the Dead Sea, those lifeless waters were **healed**. There would be a **very great multitude of fish** in that strange body of water that previously held no life.

v12 – *Along the bank of the river, on this side and that, will grow all kinds of trees used for food; their leaves will not wither, and their fruit will not fail. They will bear fruit every month, because their water flows from the sanctuary. Their fruit will be for food, and their leaves for medicine.* Along the sides of the river there were remarkable fruit trees with **leaves** that **will not wither** and **fruit** that will never **fail**. In some unknown way, **their leaves** will be used **for medicine**.

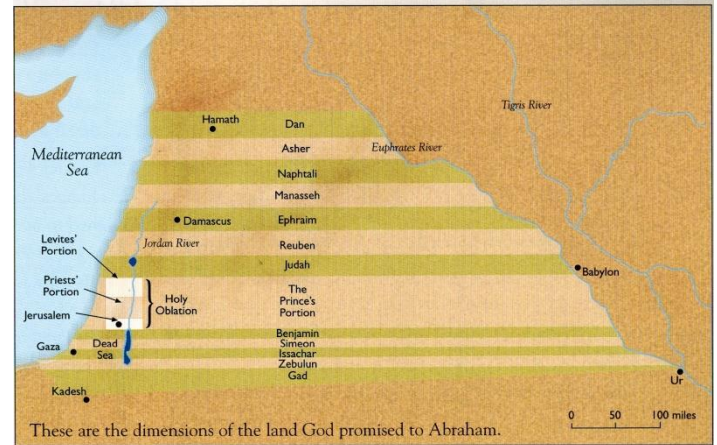
What does the description of the trees along the river bring to mind?

The New Jerusalem...

Revelation 22:2 – *In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, was the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each tree yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.*

The Millennial Kingdom temple will foreshadow the New Jerusalem in many ways.

The Division of Land During the Millennium



Ezekiel 48 – The division of the land

Why is the tribe of Dan included in the Millennial Kingdom land allotment after being excluded from the 144,000 in Revelation 7?

v1 – *These are the names of the tribes:* Here God listed the seven tribes of Israel that had a share of the northern portion of land in the coming kingdom period.

- *For Dan:* Curiously, Dan is omitted in a listing of the tribes regarding the 144,000 in Revelation 7. Many think it was because Dan was the first tribe to embrace idolatry (Genesis 49:16-17 and Judges 17-18). Now, as a demonstration of God's great grace, not only is **Dan** included, they are listed *first*.
- *For Judah:* "It is immediately evident that Judah and Benjamin, the tribes which remained faithful to the Davidic dynasty, will be honored by proximity to the center of the millennial kingdom."

v30 – *These are the gates of the city:* The image of a city with twelve gates distributed equally among the four sides and named after the twelve tribes of Israel is strikingly unconventional. City walls in Ezekiel's day were usually designed intentionally with only one gate.

What does the 12 gates remind you of?

The New Jerusalem...

Revelation 21:12-13 – *Also she had a great and high wall with twelve gates, and twelve angels at the gates, and names written on them, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel: three gates on the east, three gates on the north, three gates on the south, and three gates on the west.*

All this is suggestive of, but not the same as, the eternal state as described in Revelation 21, with its description of a new heaven and a new earth and the vision of the new Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God.

What will Jerusalem be called during the Millennial Kingdom?

v35 – *The Lord is There*

Throughout the larger section of Ezekiel 40-48, the name of the city of Jerusalem is never specifically mentioned. Here we discover why; God will give the city a new name. It will be known as *Yahweh Shammah*, “Yahweh is There.”

What applications come to mind from our discussion this evening?

- We should look forward to the return of Christ because the Millennial Kingdom will be the utopia mankind longs for and it foreshadows the Eternal State which will be even better.
- It honors God when we memorialize the sacrifice Jesus Christ made for us... and this is something we will be doing even into eternity.
- We are all called to be priests so we should act accordingly.
- God hates corrupt government and knowing He will return to get rid of it helps us to endure increasingly oppressive rulers.
- We should look forward to the return of Christ because the Millennial Temple foreshadows the New Jerusalem in many respects as the Millennial Kingdom foreshadows the Eternal State.
- God’s great mercy extends into the Millennial Kingdom and thus into eternity.