

### Ezekiel's Vision of the Millennial Kingdom – Part II

#### Ezekiel 41-42

Ezekiel 41 – *“Then he brought me into the sanctuary and measured the doorposts, six cubits wide on one side and six cubits wide on the other side—the width of the tabernacle. <sup>2</sup> The width of the entryway was ten cubits, and the side walls of the entrance were five cubits on this side and five cubits on the other side; and he measured its length, forty cubits, and its width, twenty cubits.*

*<sup>3</sup> Also he went inside and measured the doorposts, two cubits; and the entrance, six cubits high; and the width of the entrance, seven cubits. <sup>4</sup> He measured the length, twenty cubits; and the width, twenty cubits, beyond the sanctuary; and he said to me, “This is the Most Holy Place.”*

*<sup>5</sup> Next, he measured the wall of the temple, six cubits. The width of each side chamber all around the temple was four cubits on every side. <sup>6</sup> The side chambers were in three stories, one above the other, thirty chambers in each story; they rested on ledges which were for the side chambers all around, that they might be supported, but not fastened to the wall of the temple. <sup>7</sup> As one went up from story to story, the side chambers became wider all around, because their supporting ledges in the wall of the temple ascended like steps; therefore the width of the structure increased as one went up from the lowest story to the highest by way of the middle one. <sup>8</sup> I also saw an elevation all around the temple; it was the foundation of the side chambers, a full rod, that is, six cubits high. <sup>9</sup> The thickness of the outer wall of the side chambers was five cubits, and so also the remaining terrace by the place of the side chambers of the temple. <sup>10</sup> And between it and the wall chambers was a width of twenty cubits all around the temple on every side. <sup>11</sup> The doors of the side chambers opened on the terrace, one door toward the north and another toward the south; and the width of the terrace was five cubits all around.*

*<sup>12</sup> The building that faced the separating courtyard at its western end was seventy cubits wide; the wall of the building was five cubits thick all around, and its length ninety cubits.*

*<sup>13</sup> So he measured the temple, one hundred cubits long; and the separating courtyard with the building and its walls was one hundred cubits long; <sup>14</sup> also the width of the eastern face of the temple, including the separating courtyard, was one hundred cubits. <sup>15</sup> He measured the length of the building behind it, facing the separating courtyard, with its galleries on the one side and on the other side, one hundred cubits, as well as the inner temple and the porches of the court, <sup>16</sup> their doorposts and the beveled window frames. And the galleries all around their three stories opposite the threshold were paneled with wood from the ground to the windows—the windows were covered— <sup>17</sup> from the space above the door, even to the inner room, as well as outside, and on every wall all around, inside and outside, by measure.*

*<sup>18</sup> And it was made with cherubim and palm trees, a palm tree between cherub and cherub. Each cherub had two faces, <sup>19</sup> so that the face of a man was toward a palm tree on one side, and the face of a young lion toward a palm tree on the other side; thus it was made throughout the temple all around. <sup>20</sup> From the floor to the space above the door, and on the wall of the sanctuary, cherubim and palm trees were carved.*

*<sup>21</sup> The doorposts of the temple were square, as was the front of the sanctuary; their appearance was similar. <sup>22</sup> The altar was of wood, three cubits high, and its length two cubits. Its corners, its length, and its sides were of wood; and he said to me, “This is the table that is before the Lord.”*

<sup>23</sup> *The temple and the sanctuary had two doors. <sup>24</sup> The doors had two panels apiece, two folding panels: two panels for one door and two panels for the other door. <sup>25</sup> Cherubim and palm trees were carved on the doors of the temple just as they were carved on the walls. A wooden canopy was on the front of the vestibule outside. <sup>26</sup> There were beveled window frames and palm trees on one side and on the other, on the sides of the vestibule—also on the side chambers of the temple and on the canopies.*

## Background Notes

In Ezekiel 40 God gave Ezekiel a vision of a Temple to be built in Jerusalem. Ezekiel was shown the Temple and its courts from a mountain north of the Temple Mount in Jerusalem. *“In the visions of God He took me into the land of Israel and set me on a very high mountain; on it toward the south was something like the structure of a city”(40:2).* A “man” with the appearance of bronze (probably the “angel of the Lord,” or the Lord Himself) had a measuring rod in his hand. He led Ezekiel on a tour of the Temple complex, showing him all the details, including exact measurements. In chapter 40, the details of the courts and gates of the Temple complex were given, and at the end of the chapter a description of the Temple itself began.

In chapter 41, the detailed description of this future Temple continued. Chapter 42 gave further details about the Temple courts and other buildings, all part of the Temple complex.

In our Talk on Ezekiel 40 we mentioned that this Temple of Ezekiel’s vision does not correspond to any Temple that has ever existed in Jerusalem’s history. It certainly doesn’t describe the much smaller Temple that was built during Zerubbabel’s time, when the Jews returned from their captivity in Babylon. And it certainly doesn’t correspond to the Temple built by Herod the Great at the time of our Lord that was destroyed by the Romans in 70AD. So we concluded that the Temple of Ezekiel’s vision is a literal Temple that is *yet to be built in the future* - when the Lord returns.

## Doctrinal Points

### **1. The details emphasize that Ezekiel’s Temple was *not* a symbolic description of the present Christian church.**

Ezekiel 42 - *“Then he brought me out into the outer court, by the way toward the north; and he brought me into the chamber which was opposite the separating courtyard, and which was opposite the building toward the north. <sup>2</sup> Facing the length, which was one hundred cubits (the width was fifty cubits), was the north door. <sup>3</sup> Opposite the inner court of twenty cubits, and opposite the pavement of the outer court, was gallery against gallery in three stories. <sup>4</sup> In front of the chambers, toward the inside, was a walk ten cubits wide, at a distance of one cubit; and their doors faced north. <sup>5</sup> Now the upper chambers were shorter, because the galleries took away space from them more than from the lower and middle stories of the building. <sup>6</sup> For they were in three stories and did not have pillars like the pillars of the courts; therefore the upper level was shortened more than the lower and middle levels from the ground up. <sup>7</sup> And a wall which was outside ran parallel to the chambers, at the front of the chambers, toward the outer court; its length was fifty cubits. <sup>8</sup> The length of the chambers toward the outer court was fifty cubits, whereas that facing the temple was one hundred cubits. <sup>9</sup> At the lower chambers was the entrance on the east side, as one goes into them from the outer court.*

*<sup>10</sup> Also there were chambers in the thickness of the wall of the court toward the east, opposite the separating courtyard and opposite the building. <sup>11</sup> There was a walk in front of them also, and their appearance was like the chambers which were toward the north; they were as long and as wide as the others, and all their exits and entrances were according to plan. <sup>12</sup> And corresponding to the doors of the chambers that were facing south, as one enters them, there was a door in front of the walk, the way directly in front of the wall toward the east.*

*<sup>13</sup> Then he said to me, "The north chambers and the south chambers, which are opposite the separating courtyard, are the holy chambers where the priests who approach the Lord shall eat the most holy offerings. There they shall lay the most holy offerings—the grain offering, the sin offering, and the trespass offering—for the place is holy. <sup>14</sup> When the priests enter them, they shall not go out of the holy chamber into the outer court; but there they shall leave their garments in which they minister, for they are holy. They shall put on other garments; then they may approach that which is for the people."*

*<sup>15</sup> Now when he had finished measuring the inner temple, he brought me out through the gateway that faces toward the east, and measured it all around. <sup>16</sup> He measured the east side with the measuring rod, five hundred rods by the measuring rod all around. <sup>17</sup> He measured the north side, five hundred rods by the measuring rod all around. <sup>18</sup> He measured the south side, five hundred rods by the measuring rod. <sup>19</sup> He came around to the west side and measured five hundred rods by the measuring rod. <sup>20</sup> He measured it on the four sides; it had a wall all around, five hundred cubits long and five hundred wide, to separate the holy areas from the common."*

In our Talk on Ezekiel 40 we mentioned that many well-meaning Christians spiritualize the Temple in Ezekiel's vision, and teach that it represents the present day Christian church. At first this seems like a logical approach, because the New Testament teaches that the Church **is** the Temple of the Holy Spirit. The basic problem with this view, however, is that it assumes that God has no plans for a restored Israel in the future. In this view, the Church is the "New Israel."

And in this view, there is no future thousand-year earthly kingdom of Christ (that is often known as "the Millennium.") That's why the eschatology of folks who hold this view is "amillennial" - there is no future Millennium. In this view, therefore, there will be no future Millennium, so there can't be a future literal millennial Temple in Jerusalem in the literal land of Israel.

We believe this view is mistaken because of the teaching of the New Testament. Romans 11 predicts a restored literal Israel in the future. And Revelation 20 predicts a literal earthly kingdom of Christ when He returns. This literal kingdom of peace will last for a literal one thousand years, or a millennium (Revelation 20).

So we believe that the Temple of Ezekiel's vision is **not** a spiritual description of the present Church, but rather it is a literal Temple that will be built in the literal land of Israel in the future. The many meticulous details of the Temple that are given in these chapters emphasize that this is a **literal** Temple - **not** a symbolic description of the Church. There are so many details given in these chapters, including dimensions and accurate diagrams that can be drawn. In fact, the Temple itself can be built from this description, just as the Tabernacle was built from the detailed description that God gave to Moses in the book of Exodus. The details of Ezekiel's Temple emphasize that it was **not** a symbolic description of the present Christian church.

## 2. The details emphasize that Ezekiel's Temple was a description of the literal future millennial Temple.

Again we ask this question: Why would the Lord give so many minute details, including exact dimensions of a Temple complex, if He didn't intend a *literal* Temple to be built from this description? These details are a blueprint, including three-dimensional information. Numbers and sizes of stories and chambers and rooms are all given. Style of windows and details of the elaborate carvings on the doors and walls are all given. It's clear that these chapters described a literal Temple that God plans to be built in the future.

In Ezekiel 4:15-20, the entire Temple complex was square and about a mile on each side. This means that the present Temple Mount and surrounding area in Jerusalem will have to be topographically modified - and as we continue on in Ezekiel's prophecy, we'll see that this will be happen. Zechariah 14 says that there will be topographical changes in Jerusalem when the Lord returns. Ezekiel 38 mentioned a great earthquake in the land of Israel in the End Times.

So most likely the Temple of Ezekiel's vision was not the Temple of the future Tribulation period - a Temple of the Tribulation period mentioned by the Lord in His Olivet Discourse in Matthew 24. The Temple of the Tribulation period will be desecrated by the "man of lawlessness" (2 Thessalonians 2).

The Temple of Ezekiel's vision will be a *new* Temple that will be built at the beginning of the Millennium, under the direction of the Lord Himself (Zechariah 6:12-13). It will follow the blueprint given here in the prophecy of Ezekiel.

Notice, by the way, that no Ark of the Covenant was seen in Ezekiel's Temple, nor was there any "veil" to block the way into the inner sanctuary. Those items will not be needed in the millennial Temple. The details emphasize that of Ezekiel's Temple was a description of the literal future millennial Temple.

### Practical Application

#### Remember - diagrams and models are helpful.

If you were somewhat confused when you read the detailed description of the Temple in these chapters, I can guarantee you that diagrams and models would be helpful. Diagrams and models are not just for Sunday school kids! In reference to the Tabernacle and the Temples described in the Bible, a picture is definitely worth a thousand words.

When I was teaching Old Testament Survey in Bible College, I gave my students extra credit if they drew detailed diagrams or built models of items described in the Bible. I still have quite a few of those diagrams and models, and I still use them for teaching – and people continue to find them very helpful for understanding the message.

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