

Message #47

Ezekiel 43:1-27

In the previous chapters, we have seen an intricately designed Temple. We have seen the buildings and the walls and the gates and the courtyard and pillars and rooms. All of this has a purpose. The point of this is not just to build something impressive; **it is to build something that will actually feature the presence of God and the worship of God.**

In Ezekiel 43, the presence of God and the glory of God return to the Temple of God. It has been a long, long time and when this happens, it will be a monumental moment. But this moment will not be just some random act of God. This moment will feature some very unique things, which we want to point out.

WHEN THE GLORY OF GOD RETURNS TO THE TEMPLE THE INITIAL FOCAL POINT WILL BE ON THE THRONE, THE ALTAR AND THE OFFERINGS.

Clear back in chapter 10, the glory of God left the Temple (10:18). This was the place that was supposed to feature the very presence of God. But God's people were so rebellious that His presence left the place. In chapter 43, Ezekiel sees the glory of God return. The truth is it has not been back since. This chapter contains four main Temple related facts:

TEMPLE RELATED FACT #1 – God's glory returns to the Temple. **43:1-5**

After Ezekiel finished seeing the temple with its precise measurements, **verse 1** says that the man brought Ezekiel to the east gate. To this point, Ezekiel has quietly looked at the impressive Temple.

But when they got to the east gate, something changed. According to **verse 2**, he saw the “glory of the God of Israel” coming from the east. We will take a closer look at that in chapter 44. That glory was obviously seen because it “shone.” There was an “emanating radiance” of the Divine Glory of God that literally was seen.

The glory featured the voice of God that sounded like the sound of many waters and the entire earth shined with the glory of God.

This certainly reminds us of the voice of Jesus Christ when He spoke to John in the book of Revelation. His voice had the sound of many waters (Rev. 1:15). The fact that the whole earth shone with the glory of God shows this is a brand new moment on this earth.

Now the vision reminded Ezekiel of previous visions he had received from God (Ezekiel 1:1; 8-11). This vision was God Himself and when Ezekiel saw it, **verse 3** says he fell on his face. Now Ezekiel has done this on several occasions (Ezek. 1:28; 3:23; 9:8; 11:13; 44:4).

What we learn here is that even though Ezekiel had known God for many years and had served God for many years, he still had a reverence and an awe of the glory of God.

I was talking with someone this week and said when Isaiah got before God, he said he was a man of unclean lips. I said when I get before God, I intend to fall down and say I am a man of unclean everything. Ezekiel knew he was in the presence of God and he “fell on my face” (v. 3).

Men who really know God and have really walked with God for years develop a deep reverence and awe of God.

Verse 4 says the glory of the Lord came by way of the east gate. We may remember that earlier in Ezekiel the glory of the Lord left by way of the east gate (Ezek. 10:18-19; 11:23).

According to **verse 5**, the Spirit elevated Ezekiel and brought him into the inner court as the glory of God filled the Temple.

This reminds us of when God’s glory filled the tabernacle in the wilderness in Exodus 40:34-35. Now some have tried to say that this was already fulfilled because this is a reference to when Jesus entered the Temple and brought the glory of God to it, when He came to this earth the first time. But we know that when Jesus came to earth His first time, He set aside His Divine glory and, as A. C. Gaebelien said, this shows how “much at sea expositors of the Word of God are who reject the future restoration of Israel” (*Ezekiel*, p. 301).

When this happens, this will be a visible glory and it will be a permanent glory.

TEMPLE RELATED FACT #2 – God’s Throne will be in the Temple. **43:6-12**

After Ezekiel saw the glory of God fill the Temple, he heard someone talking to him inside the Temple. The Person speaking to him was God Himself.

God began to address Ezekiel and once again started by calling him “son of man.” This title means Ezekiel is a real man, but he is on a Divine mission. God specifically wanted Ezekiel to know that this new Temple would be the permanent place of His presence.

This place would be a place where He would permanently dwell among the Israelites. When this happens, never again will Israel nor their kings defile God. There will be no more immorality and no more idolatry. Obviously, this has not yet occurred.

Israel’s history has been a long, drawn out process. It has been a story of rebellion against God. When God’s glory returns to this Temple, that story is over.

According to **verse 9**, God’s holy name will never be defiled again by her abominations. In fact, God invites Israel to put away their immorality and the corpses of their corrupt leaders and He would be their God now.

Fourteen of Judah’s kings were buried close to the Temple (I Kings 2:10; 11:43; II Kings 21:18,26; 23:30). God says get them out of here.

In **verse 10**, God says to Ezekiel to describe this Temple to Israel so that they may be ashamed of their sin and let them start measuring to build it. When they realized what God wanted to do for them, they would be ashamed of themselves and their sin. H. A. Ironside said this verse is the key to the entire vision. Everything here will prompt Israel to loathe their sin and be ashamed of what she did (*Ezekiel*, p. 303).

When Israel finally admits her sin, she will carefully go over the measurements pertaining to this temple and she will have a desire to build it.

In **verse 11**, God says if they are ashamed of all that they have done, make known to them the design of everything I just revealed.

God wanted Ezekiel to write down the design of the Temple so that when the people were ashamed of their sin they would observe the design and every law and statute that would pertain to this Holy House.

Let's face it; until this Temple is built, the glory of God will not return to it.

TEMPLE RELATED FACT #3 – God will have a specifically measured altar. **43:13-18**

After the return of the glory of God to the Temple, the first topic brought up is the altar, which is the place where sacrifices are made.

We must remember that Israel rejected the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

There are three different words used in these verses for the word “altar.” In **verse 13**, the word altar is the word “mizbeach” which means slaughter place. In **verse 15**, two other Hebrew words are used: “Harel,” which means mountain of God, and “Ariel” means lion of God.

Now in **verse 13** we learn that the measurements used will be a cubit—18 inches and a hand breadth—3 inches or 21 inches. This is the standard we have used for measurement ever since chapter 40:5.

The base of the altar shall be a cubit and the width a cubit or 21 inches, 1.75 feet. **43:13**

From the base on the ground to the lower ledge shall be two cubits 3.5 feet and the width one cubit 1.75 feet. **43:14a**

From the smaller ledge to the larger ledge shall be four cubits (7 feet) and the width one cubit (1.75 feet). **43:14b**

The next section is also 4 cubits or 7 feet with an altar hearth of four horns facing upwards. **43:15**

The altar hearth is twelve cubits long (21 feet) by twelve wide (21 feet) and is perfectly square in its four sides. **43:16**

The ledge shall be fourteen cubits long (24.5 feet) by fourteen cubits wide (24.5 feet) and its border will be half a cubit (10.5 inches) **43:17** and its base shall be a cubit all the way around it 1.75 feet. (**43:17**).

Its steps will face upwards.

Verse 16 says the altar hearth is 12 cubits long and 12 cubits wide (21 feet square) and is reached by a flight of steps that face east.

There are three altars that are measured:

- 1) Moses Altar - Ex. 27:1-8—which is 7.5 feet long and wide and 4.5 feet tall.
- 2) Solomon's Altar - II Chron. 4—which is 30 feet long and wide and 15 feet tall.
- 3) Millennial Altar - Ezek. 43:13-18—which is 31.5 feet long and wide and 19.25 feet tall.

Clearly this Millennial Altar exalts Jesus Christ at the highest level.

TEMPLE RELATED FACT #4 – God's offerings will be offered on the altar. **43:19-27**

Once the Temple has been built and once the glory of God has returned to the Temple, and once the altar has been built, there will be a special eight day dedication consecration service that will focus on cleansing the entire place from the national sin of the people.

The Levitical priests, who will be from the offspring of Zadok, will be used to sanctify this special house of worship. The sons of Zadok were descendants of Zadok, who may trace their Levitical lineage to Aaron through Aaron's son Eleazar (I Chron. 6:50-53). He served as priest under David, along with Abiathar (II Sam. 8:17; 20:25). He supported Solomon (as opposed to Abiathar, who pledged himself to Adonijah), and, as a result, secured for himself and his family the privilege of serving in the Jerusalem Temple (I Kings 1). Zadok was appointed chief priest during Solomon's reign because he supported Solomon as king (I Kings 1:32-35; 2:26-27, 35). When God's people fell into sin, Zadok remained faithful and, as a result, they are elevated to this dominant position when Jesus Christ reigns.

God remembers and rewards faithfulness many years later. Never forget this. Faithfulness will be rewarded in eternity.

The introduction and dedication of this Millennial Temple and Israel's national acceptance by God takes place in an 8 day period:

Day #1 (43:19-21) - Sacrifice Young bull (**v. 19**); put blood on altar - 4 horns and border (**v. 20**); Take carcass of animal outside sanctuary and burn (**v. 21**).

Day #2 - (43:22-24) - Sacrifice unblemished male goat for sin and cleanse altar (v. 22); sacrifice unblemished ram (v. 23); they are to be presented to priests who are to throw salt on it (v. 24).

Days 3-7 (43:25-27a) - Repeat the unblemished sacrifices and purify altar as an atonement consecration.

Day 8 (43:27b) - The priests are to offer their burnt offerings to the Lord and He will be at peace with national Israel and will accept national Israel.

This moment will mark the beginning of full restoration of the nation Israel to God and God will accept Israel and these sacrifices.

Now what will be the purpose of these sacrifices? Before Jesus Christ came to this earth to offer Himself as a sacrifice, those animal sacrifices pointed forward to Him. The animal sacrifices here that begins the Millennium, point back to Him.

All of these sacrifices will be for the purpose of pointing the Israelites to Jesus Christ who gives them access to God (Heb. 10:19-25).

Jesus Christ died once for all and Israel rejected Him so this dedicatory series of sacrifices will point to that very reality.

This millennial Temple will be the great center of earthly worship during the 1000 year reign of Jesus Christ.

During the Church Age, we celebrate the communion service to look back to the cross and what Jesus did. Now it is specifically stated that this communion service will end when Jesus Christ comes to take the church away (I Corinthians 11:26). This is how “we show” and remember the Lord’s death.

During the Millennium, animal sacrifices will look back to the cross and remember what Jesus did. As Gaebelien said, the “resumed sacrifices will be the memorial of the Cross and the whole wonderful story of redemption for Israel and the nations of the earth, during the kingdom reign of Christ” (*Ibid.*, p. 312).