

Survey of the Bible Ezekiel's Temple Part 2

The last chapters of Ezekiel come on the heels of the vision Ezekiel was given regarding the house of Israel being brought from death to life. This life was a gift from God as He took spiritually dead people and raised them up as He brought life to them.

As we saw this was a vision of the true Israel of God taken from every corner of the earth in every age, as God raised His people from death to life as they embrace the Messiah promised to Adam and Eve.

Ephesians 2:4-10 ⁴ But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, ⁵ even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), ⁶ and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus, ⁷ so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. ⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, *it is* the gift of God; ⁹ not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. ¹⁰ For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.

And so, the context of Ezekiel's vision of the tabernacle of God described in chapters 40 and following necessarily envision the true tabernacle that is Christ Himself. And it is that tabernacle that Ezekiel is demonstrating in these chapters; the same tabernacle that will house both Jew and Gentile and the same tabernacle that is spoken of in the book of Acts.

Acts 15:14-18 ¹⁴ "Simeon has related how God first concerned Himself about taking from among the Gentiles a people for His name. ¹⁵ "With this the words of the Prophets agree, just as it is written, ¹⁶ 'AFTER THESE THINGS I will return, AND I WILL REBUILD THE TABERNACLE OF DAVID WHICH HAS FALLEN, AND I WILL REBUILD ITS RUINS, AND I WILL RESTORE IT, ¹⁷ SO THAT THE REST OF MANKIND MAY SEEK THE LORD, AND ALL THE GENTILES WHO ARE CALLED BY MY NAME,' ¹⁸ SAYS THE LORD, WHO MAKES THESE THINGS KNOWN FROM LONG AGO.

This is the same tabernacle the writer of Hebrews comments on.

Hebrews 8:1-2 ^{NAU} Now the main point in what has been said *is this*: we have such a high priest, who has taken His seat at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, ² a minister in the sanctuary and in the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, not man.

And by the way, this is the same tabernacle, according to the pattern God delivered to Moses, that our writer in Hebrews, tells us has been replaced.

Hebrews 9:1-12 ^{NAU} Now even the first *covenant* had regulations of divine worship and the earthly sanctuary. ² For there was a tabernacle prepared, the outer one, in which *were* the lampstand and the table and the sacred bread; this is called the holy place. ³ Behind the second veil there was a tabernacle which is called the Holy of Holies, ⁴ having a golden altar of incense and the ark of the covenant covered on all sides with gold, in which was a golden jar holding the manna, and Aaron's rod which budded, and the tables of the covenant; ⁵ and above it *were* the cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy seat; but of these things we cannot now speak in detail. ⁶ Now when these things have been so prepared, the priests are continually entering the outer tabernacle performing the divine worship, ⁷ but into the second, only the high priest *enters* once a year, not without *taking* blood, which he offers for himself and for the sins of the people committed in ignorance. ⁸ The Holy Spirit *is* signifying this, that the way into the holy place has not yet been disclosed while the outer tabernacle is still standing, ⁹ which *is* a symbol for the present time. Accordingly both gifts and sacrifices are offered which cannot make the worshiper perfect in conscience, ¹⁰ since they *relate* only to food and drink and various washings, regulations for the body imposed until a time of reformation. ¹¹ But when Christ appeared *as* a high priest of the good things to come, *He entered* through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation; ¹² and not through the blood of goats and calves, but through His own blood, He entered the holy place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption.

Ezekiel has been describing a tabernacle that closely resembles the one Israel was commanded to build through Moses and then David. This was the tabernacle that was associated with the first covenant of the law, but even that tabernacle was always designed to point to the true tabernacle found in Christ.

And keep in mind too that just before Ezekiel is given the vision of the tabernacle he receives a promise that God will bring His people, who are identified as the house of Israel, into this tabernacle.

Ezekiel 39:25-29 ²⁵ Therefore thus says the Lord GOD, "Now I will restore the fortunes of Jacob and have mercy on the whole house of Israel; and I will be jealous for My holy name. ²⁶ "They will forget their disgrace and all their treachery which they perpetrated against Me, when they live securely on their *own* land with no one to make *them* afraid. ²⁷ "When I bring them back from the peoples and gather them from the lands of their enemies, then I shall be sanctified through them in the sight of the many nations. ²⁸ "Then they will know that I am the LORD their God because I made them go into exile among the nations, and then gathered them *again* to their own land; and I will leave none of them there any longer. ²⁹ "I will not hide My face from them any longer, for I will have poured out My Spirit on the house of Israel," declares the Lord GOD.

This is a future promise for the house of Israel and of this house God says, "I will have poured out My Spirit on the house of Israel, declares the Lord."

Now, we've heard this language before in the book of Ezekiel.

^{NAU} **Ezekiel 36:27** "I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances.

^{NAU} **Ezekiel 37:14** "I will put My Spirit within you and you will come to life, and I will place you on your own land. Then you will know that I, the LORD, have spoken and done it," declares the LORD."

Both of these are references to the future of Israel, but as we've seen this is a reference to the future work of the Spirit on these people, called the house of Israel.

Anyone remember another O.T. prophecy regarding this future work of the Spirit on the house of Israel?

Joel 2:25-32 ²⁵ "Then I will make up to you for the years That the swarming locust has eaten, The creeping locust, the stripping locust and the gnawing locust, My great army which I sent among you. ²⁶ "You will have plenty to eat and be satisfied And praise the name of the LORD your God, Who has dealt wondrously with you;

Then My people will never be put to shame. ²⁷ ***Thus you will know that I am in the midst of Israel, And that I am the LORD your God, And there is no other;*** And My people will never be put to shame. ²⁸ "It will come about after this That I will pour out My Spirit on all mankind; And your sons and daughters will prophesy, Your old men will dream dreams, Your young men will see visions. ²⁹ "Even on the male and female servants I will pour out My Spirit in those days. ³⁰ "I will display wonders in the sky and on the earth, Blood, fire and columns of smoke. ³¹ "The sun will be turned into darkness And the moon into blood Before the great and awesome day of the LORD comes. ³² "And it will come about that whoever calls on the name of the LORD Will be delivered; For on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem There will be those who escape, As the LORD has said, Even among the survivors whom the LORD calls.

Anyone remember when this future work of the Spirit was fulfilled for the house of Israel?

Acts 2:1-21 ^{NAU} When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. ² And suddenly there came from heaven a noise like a violent rushing wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. ³ And there appeared to them tongues as of fire distributing themselves, and they rested on each one of them. ⁴ And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit was giving them utterance. ⁵ Now there were Jews living in Jerusalem, devout men from every nation under heaven. ⁶ And when this sound occurred, the crowd came together, and were bewildered because each one of them was hearing them speak in his own language. ⁷ They were amazed and astonished, saying, "Why, are not all these who are speaking Galileans?" ⁸ "And how is it that we each hear *them* in our own language to which we were born?" ⁹ "Parthians and Medes and Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, ¹⁰ Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the districts of Libya around Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, ¹¹ Cretans and Arabs-- we hear them in our *own* tongues speaking of the mighty deeds of God." ¹² And they all continued in amazement and great perplexity, saying to one another, "What does this mean?" ¹³ But others were mocking and saying, "They are full of sweet wine." ¹⁴ But Peter, taking his stand with the eleven, raised his voice and declared to them: "Men of Judea and all you who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you and give heed to my words. ¹⁵ "For these men are not drunk,

as you suppose, for it is *only* the third hour of the day; ¹⁶ but this is what was spoken of through the prophet Joel: ¹⁷ 'AND IT SHALL BE IN THE LAST DAYS,' God says, 'THAT I WILL POUR FORTH OF MY SPIRIT ON ALL MANKIND; AND YOUR SONS AND YOUR DAUGHTERS SHALL PROPHECY, AND YOUR YOUNG MEN SHALL SEE VISIONS, AND YOUR OLD MEN SHALL DREAM DREAMS; ¹⁸ EVEN ON MY BONDSLAVES, BOTH MEN AND WOMEN, I WILL IN THOSE DAYS POUR FORTH OF MY SPIRIT And they shall prophesy. ¹⁹ 'AND I WILL GRANT WONDERS IN THE SKY ABOVE AND SIGNS ON THE EARTH BELOW, BLOOD, AND FIRE, AND VAPOR OF SMOKE. ²⁰ 'THE SUN WILL BE TURNED INTO DARKNESS AND THE MOON INTO BLOOD, BEFORE THE GREAT AND GLORIOUS DAY OF THE LORD SHALL COME. ²¹ 'AND IT SHALL BE THAT EVERYONE WHO CALLS ON THE NAME OF THE LORD WILL BE SAVED.'

What Ezekiel is saying in chapter 39, which leads up to the vision of the tabernacle in chapters 40 and following, and what the prophet Joel attested to, and what Peter confirms regarding this work of the Spirit, are all the same thing, and is nothing short than the fulfillment of God's promise to bring His people, the Israel of God, from every corner of the earth in those days after Christ's resurrection, when the Spirit begins to gather His people together.

And so, when Ezekiel is given this vision of the tabernacle it is in this context, and it therefore must necessarily be describing a temple that points to the one true temple in which the Spirit gathers His people *in those days*.

This temple that Ezekiel sees is described in such detail that people have actually been able to construct it. But it's not meant to be constructed. It is meant to demonstrate how God has made this temple perfect in every way where His hand has meticulously and personally designed this temple for the specific purpose of being the means to redeeming His people.

Revelation 7:15-17 ¹⁵ "For this reason, they are before the throne of God; and they serve Him day and night in His temple; and He who sits on the throne will spread His tabernacle over them. ¹⁶ "They will hunger no longer, nor thirst anymore; nor will the sun beat down on them, nor any heat; ¹⁷ for the Lamb in the center of the throne will be their shepherd, and will guide them to springs of the water of life; and God will wipe every tear from their eyes."

Revelation 21:3-5 ³ And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them, ⁴ and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be *any* death; there will no longer be *any* mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away." ⁵ And He who sits on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new." And He said, "Write, for these words are faithful and true."

This is the perfect tabernacle of God that Ezekiel is pointing to with shadows and images found in a tabernacle the Jews would have been familiar with, but would not be able to build on their own, because it was never designed to be a tabernacle made with human hands.

Acts 7:48-50 ⁴⁸ "However, the Most High does not dwell in *houses* made by *human* hands; as the prophet says: ⁴⁹ 'HEAVEN IS MY THRONE, AND EARTH IS THE FOOTSTOOL OF MY FEET; WHAT KIND OF HOUSE WILL YOU BUILD FOR ME?' says the Lord, 'OR WHAT PLACE IS THERE FOR MY REPOSE?' ⁵⁰ 'WAS IT NOT MY HAND WHICH MADE ALL THESE THINGS?'

This is the tabernacle that God is showing Ezekiel and what is interesting is that after Ezekiel is given all of the details of what this tabernacle looks like he is then told that within this design there is one overarching purpose to this temple.

Ezekiel 43:11-12 ¹¹ "If they are ashamed of all that they have done, make known to them the design of the house, its structure, its exits, its entrances, all its designs, all its statutes, and all its laws. And write *it* in their sight, so that they may observe its whole design and all its statutes and do them. ¹² "***This is the law of the house: its entire area on the top of the mountain all around shall be most holy. Behold, this is the law of the house.***

What is God telling Israel in this statement?

Whatever God designs it is meant to do one thing and one thing only, declare His greatness and glory in His holiness because nothing unclean shall enter into this holy temple that is not holy itself.

In fact, turn with me and tell me if you don't see Ezekiel's vision being declared.

Revelation 21:15 - 27 ¹⁵ The one who spoke with me had a gold measuring rod to measure the city, and its gates and its wall. ¹⁶ The city is laid out as a square, and its length is as great as the width; and he measured the city with the rod, fifteen hundred miles; its length and width and height are equal. ¹⁷ And he measured its wall, seventy-two yards, *according to* human measurements, which are *also* angelic *measurements*. ¹⁸ The material of the wall was jasper; and the city was pure gold, like clear glass. ¹⁹ The foundation stones of the city wall were adorned with every kind of precious stone. The first foundation stone was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, chalcedony; the fourth, emerald; ²⁰ the fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, topaz; the tenth, chrysolite; the eleventh, jacinth; the twelfth, amethyst. ²¹ And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; each one of the gates was a single pearl. And the street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass. ²² I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. ²³ And the city has no need of the sun or of the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God has illumined it, and its lamp *is* the Lamb. ²⁴ The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it. ²⁵ In the daytime (for there will be no night there) its gates will never be closed; ²⁶ and they will bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it; ²⁷ and ***nothing unclean, and no one who practices abomination and lying, shall ever come into it, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life.***

This is the temple that is measured out for Ezekiel and the law of the house is God's holiness.

Some people get caught up thinking that there is a deeper message in all the intricate details of this tabernacle being laid out for Ezekiel and that unless we define every single door and every single wall hanging and every single measurement that we will never truly understand the importance of this structure. And it is true that these things do have meaning.

But people can get so lost in looking at the forest of details of this tabernacle in Ezekiel that they lose sight of the tree that is to be the focus, and that's the tree of life in the center of this temple which depicts the root that supports that tree.

Revelation 22:14 ¹⁴ Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter by the gates into the city.

Revelation 22:16 ¹⁶ "I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things for the churches. I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star."

But, as we come back to Ezekiel we get another glimpse into this tabernacle that might seem reminiscent.

Ezekiel 47:1-9 ^{NAU} Then he brought me back to the door of the house; and behold, water was flowing from under the threshold of the house toward the east, for the house faced east. And the water was flowing down from under, from the right side of the house, from south of the altar. ² He brought me out by way of the north gate and led me around on the outside to the outer gate by way of *the gate* that faces east. And behold, water was trickling from the south side. ³ When the man went out toward the east with a line in his hand, he measured a thousand cubits, and he led me through the water, water *reaching* the ankles. ⁴ Again he measured a thousand and led me through the water, water *reaching* the knees. Again he measured a thousand and led me through *the water*, water *reaching* the loins. ⁵ Again he measured a thousand; *and it was* a river that I could not ford, for the water had risen, *enough* water to swim in, a river that could not be forded. ⁶ He said to me, "Son of man, have you seen *this*?" Then he brought me back to the bank of the river. ⁷ Now when I had returned, behold, on the bank of the river there *were* very many trees on the one side and on the other. ⁸ Then he said to me, "These waters go out toward the eastern region and go down into the Arabah; then they go toward the sea, being made to flow into the sea, and the waters *of the sea* become fresh. ⁹ "It will come about that every living creature which swarms in every place where the river goes, will live. And there will be very many fish, for these waters go there and *the others* become fresh; so everything will live where the river goes.

Does any of this sound familiar?

Revelation 22:1-7 ^{NAU} Then he showed me a river of the water of life, clear as crystal, coming from the throne of God and of the Lamb, ² in the middle of its street. On either side of the river was the tree of life, bearing twelve *kinds of* fruit, yielding its fruit every month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. ³ There will no longer be any curse; and the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and His bond-servants will serve Him; ⁴ they will see His face, and His name *will be* on their foreheads. ⁵ And there will no longer be *any* night; and they will not have need of the light of a lamp nor the light of the sun,

because the Lord God will illumine them; and they will reign forever and ever. ⁶ And he said to me, "These words are faithful and true"; and the Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, sent His angel to show to His bond-servants the things which must soon take place. ⁷ "And behold, I am coming quickly. Blessed is he who heeds the words of the prophecy of this book."

It is in this context that we revisit the people of God in the midst of His tabernacle in the book of Revelation, where we are told that they reign with Him for a thousand years, the same thousand years whereby Satan is bound.

Revelation 20:2-10 ² And he laid hold of the dragon, the serpent of old, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; ³ and he threw him into the abyss, and shut *it* and sealed *it* over him, so that he would not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were completed; after these things he must be released for a short time. ⁴ Then I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was given to them. And I *saw* the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received the mark on their forehead and on their hand; and they came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. ⁵ The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were completed. This is the first resurrection. ⁶ Blessed and holy is the one who has a part in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a thousand years. ⁷ When the thousand years are completed, Satan will be released from his prison, ⁸ and will come out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together for the war; the number of them is like the sand of the seashore. ⁹ And they came up on the broad plain of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city, and fire came down from heaven and devoured them. ¹⁰ And the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are also; and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

I know I told you last week that we would visit this passage, but as I went through what God revealed to Ezekiel I was struck with so many things that I had to try and expound them to help to bring to light the need for Ezekiel to be shown this amazing temple.

But I will come back to this vision of John's next time and help us see how Ezekiel's vision is tied to this portion of Revelation as we ask a number of questions, including, will Satan be bound for a literal thousand years on planet earth in the future?