

**Ezekiel, Son of Man**  
**Class 12 - June 18, 2014**  
**Reading: Ezekiel 40-44**

**Chapter 40**

It is April 28th, 573 BC. We have now come twenty years since Ezekiel first was called by God to bear the burden of the word of Jehovah. It has been nineteen years since he was taken to see the blasphemous temple in Jerusalem, which was the symbol of the idolatry of Israel, rather than the glory of God. It has been twelve years since the events in the preceding chapters (Ezekiel 33:21). Now God has a new vision for Ezekiel; a wonderful vision of the will of God. For the next four chapters we will see the perfected temple, and then we will see the perfected worship of Israel.

Let us recall that Ezekiel is not the only prophet in this dark hour. Jeremiah prophesied up until Jerusalem's destruction in the year 586 BC, and tradition splits as to whether he was stoned in Egypt, or captured by Nebuchadnezzar and brought to Babylon. Daniel is in the midst of his minister-ship for the Babylonians. In some ways their visions are very different; Daniel speaks to Gentiles; Jeremiah speaks to the king of Judah; Ezekiel speaks to the exiles. Their forecasts to the future emphasize different points: Jeremiah sees the new covenant and king; Daniel looks to the new kingdom; Ezekiel sees the new temple. All three mix their symbols so that it is clear they see the same things.

Prophet	Promise	Stated	Meaning	Fulfilled
Ezekiel	New Temple	<i>Ezekiel 43:12 "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"</i>	The Church	<i>2 Corinthians 6:16 Or what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God;</i>
Daniel	New Kingdom	<i>Daniel 2:44 "In the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which will never be destroyed, and that kingdom will not be left for another people; it will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, but it will itself endure forever."</i>	The Church	<i>Hebrews 12:28 Therefore, since we receive a kingdom which cannot be shaken,</i>
Jeremiah	New Covenant	<i>Jeremiah 31:31 "Behold, days are coming," declares the LORD, "when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah,</i>	The Church	<i>Hebrews 9:15 For this reason He is the mediator of a new covenant, so that, since a death has taken place for the redemption of the transgressions that were committed under the first covenant, those who have been called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.</i>

Chapter 40 introduces us with a spiritual journey that is in a way a mirror of the journey in chapter 8. Ezekiel is taken to Jerusalem in the Spirit, and again meets a man of unusual appearance. In chapter eight the Man appeared as glowing metal; here He appears as bronze. In chapter 9 He is the destroyer; here He is the builder. The measuring rod of this new temple is a theme used repeatedly in Scripture:

*Zechariah 2:1 Then I lifted up my eyes and looked, and behold, [there was] a man with a measuring line in his hand.*

*Revelation 11:1 And there was given me a measuring rod like a staff; and someone said, "Rise and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and those who worship in it.*

This imagery could either reflect the specific plan and pattern of God, or the concept in judgment. Since this is God as a builder, the former seems to be the more likely scenario.

The next three chapters are a record of the measurements taken of this spiritual temple. It was not meant to be a literal view of the restored temple; neither Zerubbabel's rebuilt temple, nor the temple in the time of Herod fit this model. In fact, we are told that this measurement is not about a physical temple, as in chapter 43 we are told that this is a series of measurements that are meant to bring the children of Israel in Ezekiel's time to repentance.

*Ezekiel 43:10 "As for you, son of man, describe the temple to the house of Israel, that they may be ashamed of their iniquities; and let them measure the plan.*

We are NOT seeing the restored temple Zerubbabel would begin building 35 years in the future (538BC), nor is this the temple of Herod, built on Zerubbabel's temple around 20BC. This is not a future temple yet to come. This is something far more grand and holy. It is both the new covenant and the kingdom. It is, as we will see, the church that Jesus built.

## **Chapter 41**

We continue the measurements of the spiritual temple of God. Here we are taken to the most precious part of the temple: the Holy of Holies. One point of consideration is that the Holy of Holies is a square (20 cubits by 20 cubits). It measures the same in the temple Solomon built (2 Chronicles 3:8). When the tabernacle was built, it was 10 cubits by 10 cubits by 10 cubits (Exodus 26). Records indicate that Herod's temple retained this same measurement of the Holy of Holies. The Holiest place was always a perfect square.

We are told in Scripture that the temple / tabernacle is a model of spiritual things:

*Hebrews 8:4-5 Now if He were on earth, He would not be a priest at all, since there are those who offer the gifts according to the Law; who serve a copy and shadow of the heavenly things, just as Moses was warned by God when he was*

*about to erect the tabernacle; for, "SEE," He says, "THAT YOU MAKE all things ACCORDING TO THE PATTERN WHICH WAS SHOWN YOU ON THE MOUNTAIN."*

*Hebrews 9:23 Therefore it was necessary for the copies of the things in the heavens to be cleansed with these, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these.*

Knowing that this pattern reflects heavenly things, we can deduce with authority that if God symbolically dwells in the Holy of Holies, then it is a figure of Heaven. This is borne out by the understanding that Jesus pierced that veil between the two places by entering into Heaven:

*Hebrews 10:19-20 Therefore, brethren, since we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, His flesh*

Thus, in Revelation, when John sees a vision of the church as heaven itself, it is no wonder he sees what is a great cube, following this ancient pattern:

*Revelation 21:16 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.*

Two thoughts we need to grasp. First, the temple was NEVER meant to be a sustained structure. God would NEVER truly dwell on earth (Isaiah 66:1), and the temple on earth was a mere thing that was a pattern of a greater spiritual idea. Therefore, anyone who hopes that this temple, clearly spoken of as a spiritual idea, might still be built on earth hopes for merely *"things which are a mere shadow of what is to come; but the substance belongs to Christ"* (Colossians 2:17). The more excellent covenant, built on more excellent promises, put away these things. To crave them only reproduces the errors of the Jews who rejected Christ.

Second, to the people of Ezekiel's time, a people who have lived for over a decade without the hope of a temple, a place to come before God and beg mercy, offer worship or obtain forgiveness, this temple is not only a hope that is like water to a man dying of thirst, it is also more magnificent than any of the previous temples. Not only was this promise desperately needed, it was far more magnificent than could be contemplated.

## **Chapter 42**

As with the models of the temple in the past, this temple is meant to house the priests of God. If this is an image of the new covenant of Christ, and the temple is the church, it is immediately understood that the priests are those who serve Christ; Christians, in other words.

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

*1 Peter 2:9 But you are A CHOSEN RACE, A royal PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR God's OWN POSSESSION, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;*

While we are not focusing on the specifics of the measurements, there is a subtle point made with verse 20:

*Ezekiel 42:20 He measured it on the four sides; it had a wall all around, the length five hundred and the width five hundred, to divide between the holy and the profane.*

Like so many of the other shadows of the Old Testament, such as the ark of Noah, the city of refuge, or even the homes of the Israelites on the night of the Passover, the temple is set as an image of a place of sanctuary (41:1) that sets them apart from the world. Those who depart from this place join the profane, and share in their fate.

### **Chapter 43**

Back in chapter 10, Ezekiel watched as the glory of the Lord departed from the temple in Jerusalem. Ezekiel tells us that this is the same movement he had seen before, nearly 20 years earlier, when God left the temple. Now God is returning to this spiritual temple, in the spiritual Jerusalem.

More importantly, with this arrival God places Himself back into a relationship with Israel. Let's remember that God said this would occur when the New Covenant was established. It is not hard to determine what this means; Jesus, as He was preparing to go to His death, told His disciples that His blood would purchase the New Covenant, which is the church:

*Mark 14:24 And He said to them, "This is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many."*

*Acts 20:28b "..... shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood."*

*Hebrews 12:24 and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood, which speaks better than the blood of Abel.*

We have already mentioned it, but it is good to bring up now an important point. We are told in verses 10 through 12 that this imagery is not literal, but meant to bring to truth the idea of the Holiness of God. By describing a specific pattern, God manages to show that the Temple of His design was detailed and precise, and that the practice of managing the previous temple by the desires of men was an utter failure and rejection of God's glory. God told Moses to be certain to follow the pattern, and the pattern's purpose was to demonstrate the trust of men in God.

How much more true is this today in the New Covenant? We are given a spiritual pattern for the New Temple, the church, in the New Testament. We are told its purpose, its work, its operation, and its offices. Yet why is it that as much as Israel did then, many today seek to format the temple of God into their own devices, and thereby corrupt it? Paul said that men would come who would desire to sit in the place of God in His Temple (2 Thessalonians 2:4); this man of perdition is not some mysterious singular villain, but any one of us who seek to act beyond the accordance of the pattern of the New Testament in the church.

*Hebrews 10:29 How much severer punishment do you think he will deserve who has trampled under foot the Son of God, and has regarded as unclean the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has insulted the Spirit of grace?*

## **Chapter 44**

In the parliament building of British Columbia, in the town of Victoria, there is a special door at the front of the building. No one but the Queen (or King) of England is permitted to enter that door. Chapter 44 introduces such a door to the new Temple. In this case, the Prince (who was earlier called "David", and we know to be Jesus) alone can enter it and sit and eat before God. We consider that Jesus alone has entered the true Holy of Holies, heaven, and sits before God, making intercession on our behalf.

*Hebrews 9:11-12 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; 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.*

This chapter also brings us to the restoration of the priests of God, the people of God. Previously, the priests had desecrated themselves. Now they would minister before God. They are identified as the descendants of Zadok. Zadok was high priest in the time of David, having first ministered with and then replaced Ahimilech of the line of Levi. It may be that this replacement of the lineage of the priests is parallel to the new priests of the covenant of Christ. Zadok may also refer to the meaning of that name rather than the person; Zadok means "righteous" (consider its use in Melchizedek and Saduccee). Consider the prophetic words in Psalm 132:

*Psalms 132:9 Let Your priests be clothed with righteousness, And let Your godly ones sing for joy.*

The passage continues to place on the priests the conditions of their priesthood. These are not meant to be the specific commands of the covenant of Christ; most are repeats of the law of Moses on the priesthood, and some would conflict with the law of Christ's liberty. Yet the spiritual implications of remaining undefiled, of placing on the garments of the priesthood, and other such actions are clearly seen in Christ:

*James 3:6 And the tongue is a fire, the very world of iniquity; the tongue is set among our members as that which defiles the entire body, and sets on fire the course of our life, and is set on fire by hell.*