

Ezekiel

February 17, 2008

Chapters 40-48

I. Introduction to Ezekiel 40-48

The prophecies of 40-48 have never been completely fulfilled. For example, we have not seen the reinstatement of the priesthood or sacrifices, or tribal allotments. As such, it is exceedingly difficult to interpret much of this material. For our purposes in this session we will attempt to view it as the original readers might have viewed it.

For example, the temple described in these chapters has been interpreted as each and every one of these temples (closest Biblical reference in parenthesis):

1. Solomon's Temple (Jer. 32:38-44)
2. Zerubabbel's Temple (Ezra 3:1-8)
3. Herod's Temple (Gospels)
4. Present Temple, or life of a believer (1 Cor. 6:10-20)
5. The Temple of Revelation 11 (Rev. 11:1-2, probably after the rapture)
6. Ezekiel's Millennial Temple (Ez 40-48)
7. Eternal Temple (Rev. 21:22, after the creation of the New Earth and New Heaven)

Some also say that these verses must be taken non-literally.

Chapter 40-48 can be divided into:

40:1-43:12 New Temple

43:13-46:24 New worship of God

47:1-48:35 New apportionment of the land among the tribes

The prophecies of chapters 40-48 were written later than earlier chapters per the chronology offered in the text. These messages came thirteen years after the six vision messages of restoration in 33:1-39:29. (April 19, 573 BC, per Cooper)

II. New Temple (40:1-43:12)

The "man" mentioned for the first time in 40:3 appears to be Ezekiel's guide through these future times. Some think that the "man" is the angel from Chapter 9.

The city might be Jerusalem, perhaps relocated since the temple is apparently there. The mountain is not known. The main guesses are Mt. Zion or Mt. Hermon. If it is Mt. Zion, then gymnastics are needed to place the city relative to the mountain.

Note that the Ark of the Covenant is not mentioned in the temple, in keeping with:

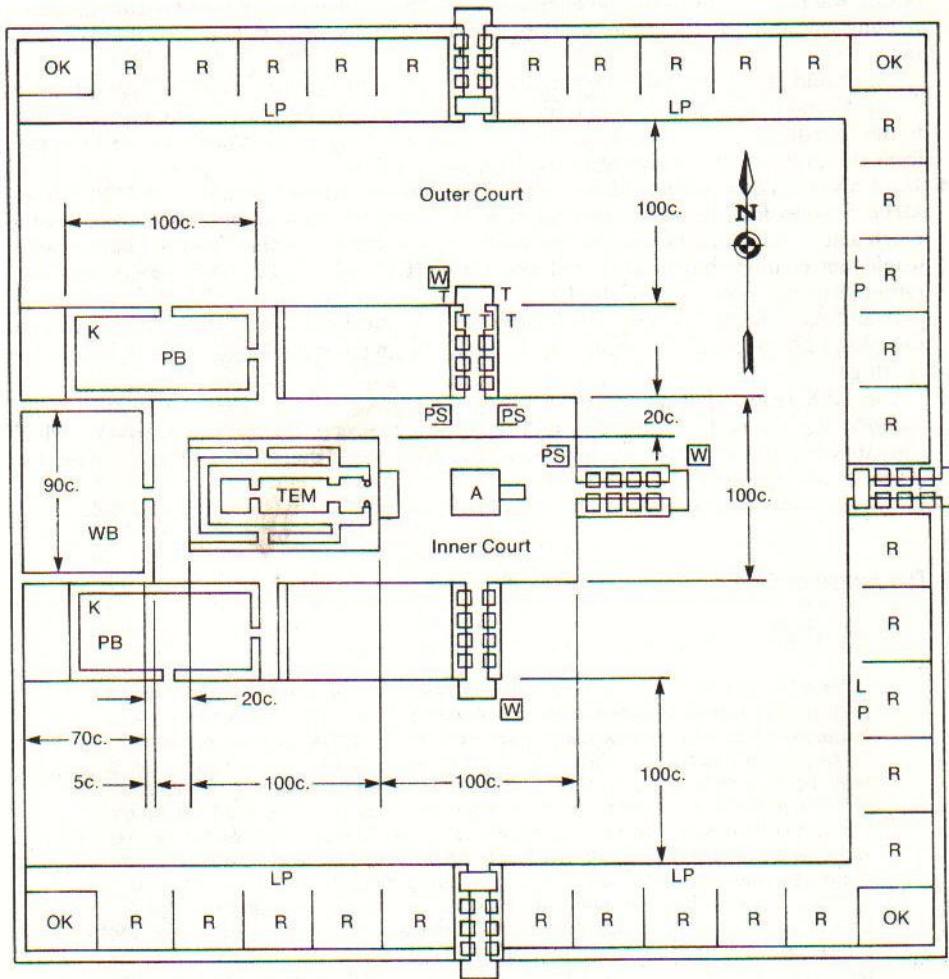
Jer 3:15-17

16 In those days, when your numbers have increased greatly in the land," declares the LORD, "men will no longer say, 'The ark of the covenant of the LORD.' It will never enter their minds or be remembered; it will not be missed, nor will another one be made. 17 At that time they will call Jerusalem The Throne

of the LORD, and all nations will gather in Jerusalem to honor the name of the LORD. No longer will they follow the stubbornness of their evil hearts.

NIV

Figure 1
Temple Complex



Key:

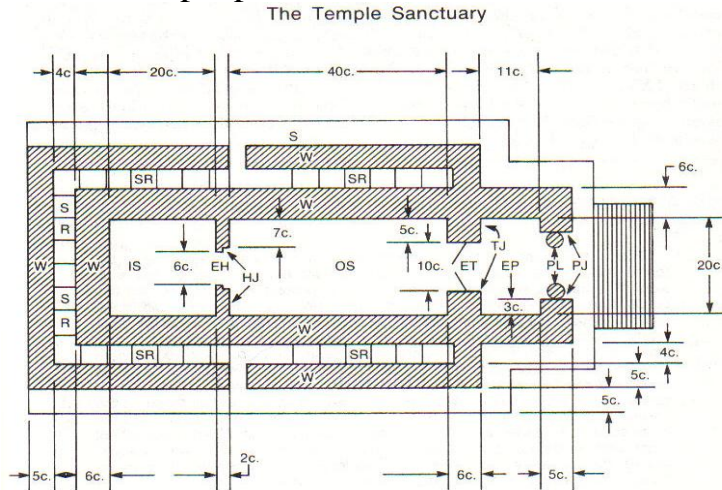
- A Altar (Ezek 40:47b)
- WB Building of the separation yard (Ezek 41:12, 13b, 15)
- K Kitchen for priests to boil sacrifices (Ezek 46:19–20)
- OK Kitchens for priests to boil people's sacrifices (Ezek 46:21–24)
- LP Pavement strip (Ezek 40:17–18)
- PB Priests' chambers (Ezek 42:1–14)
- R Rooms in outer court for storage or priests' quarters (Ezek 40:17)
- PS Rooms for singers (priests) (Ezek 40:44–46)
- T Tables for slaughter of sacrifices (two at each point) (Ezek 40:39–43)
- TEM Temple proper (Ezek 40:48–41:11, 13a, 14, 16, 23–26)
- W Rooms for washing offerings (Ezek 40:38)
- Inner court (Ezek 40:44–47a)
- Outer court (Ezek 40:17–19, 23, 27, 39–43)
- Width from outer gates to inner gates (Ezek 40:19, 23, 27)

Usually, the “man” leading Ezekiel does not tell us of the significance of what Ezekiel sees. The “man” does explain about the rooms of the Priests. Verses 13 and 14 tell us how the Priests will use the rooms. Whether they also lived in them as suggested above is speculation, but they might have done so.

-The two purposes noted for these rooms were:

1. For the priests to eat the most holy things there (things offered as sacrifices)

2. To keep there the sacred vestments when they put them off before going into the outer court to the people.



- Key:
- ET Entry to the temple (outer sanctuary) (Ezek 41:2a; cf. 41:23–25)
 - EH Entry to the Most Holy Place (inner sanctuary) (Ezek 41:3; cf. 41:23–25)
 - OS Holy Place (outer sanctuary) (Ezek 41:2b, 21b)
 - IS Most Holy Place (inner sanctuary) (Ezek 41:4)
 - EP Portico (porch, vestibule) (Ezek 40:48–49)
 - PL Pillars (Ezek 40:49)
 - HJ Projecting wall (jamb, post) of the entry to the Most Holy Place (Ezek 41:3)
 - PJ Projecting wall (jamb, post) of the porch (Ezek 40:48)
 - TJ Projecting wall (jamb, post) of the temple proper (Ezek 41:1)
 - SR Side rooms of the temple sanctuary (Ezek 41:5b–11a)
 - S Space left around the temple (platform) (Ezek 41:11b)
 - W Wall of the temple (Ezek 41:5a)
- Overall dimensions of the temple with yard on either side (Ezek 41:13a, 14)
- Windows (Ezek 41:16, 26) on the porch, side chambers, and decoration (Ezek 41:16–20)

We saw the glory of God leave Israel in chapters 10-11; the location is the Kebar River, the location of the visions in Chapters 1 and 10. The return of the glory shows that the temple complex was acceptable to God. The Shekinah glory is never mentioned in regards to Zerubbabel's temple in the Bible.

Questions: Why are all the measurements made in this chapter?
Why would the glory returning to the temple be important to the Jews?

III. New Worship of God (43:13-46:24)

In this chapter, we see the restoration of Israel in that way that approaches perfection. Given that we do not see reasons to interpret this allegorically, we would usually interpret this literally. Why would this wonderful restoration be of significance to the Jews?

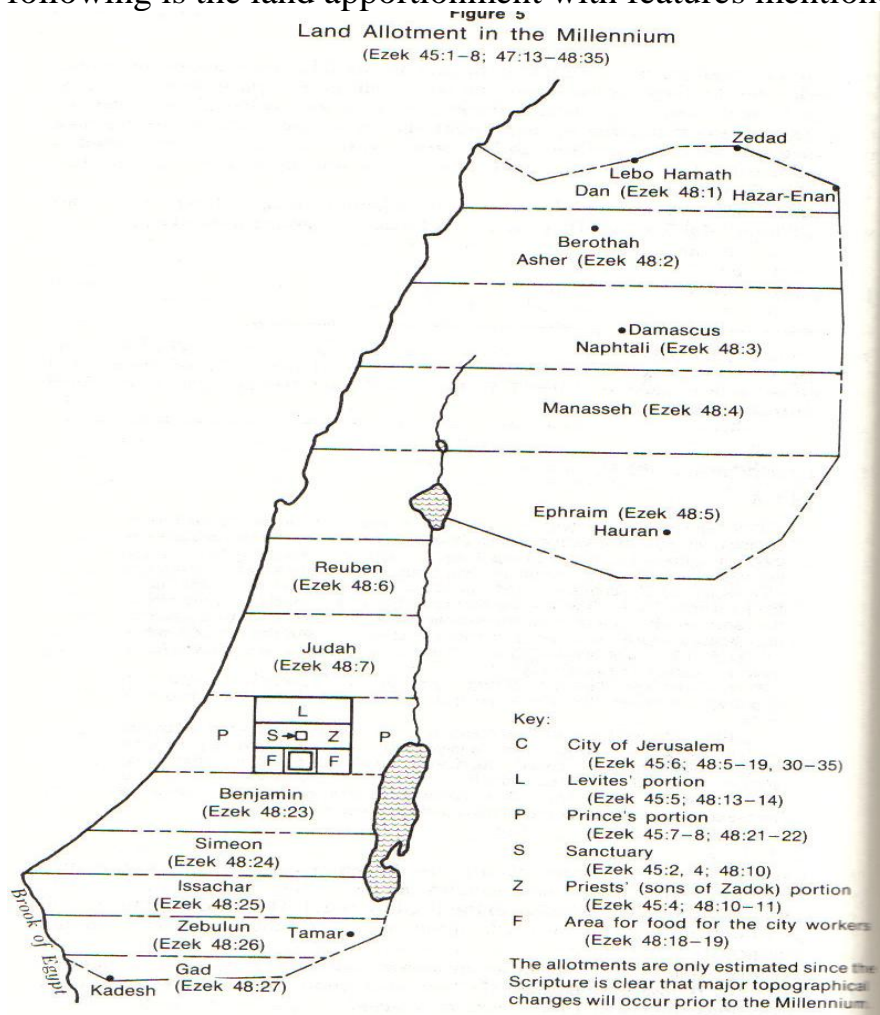
Beginning in 43:13, we see the restitution of the altar and a restart of the sacrifice system. How is it that the Jews are offering sin sacrifices in this chapter? Is not the blood of Christ sufficient for their salvation? Note Acts 21:20 ff; the ritual that Paul is following is described in Numbers 6 and requires a sin offering.

In Chapter 44, the prince is not Jesus since he will offer a sin sacrifice for himself:

Ezek 45:22-23

22 On that day the prince is to provide a bull as a sin offering for himself and for all the people of the land. NIV

As such, the identity of the individual is not known. He also has offspring as in Chapter 46. The following is the land apportionment with features mentioned in Chapters 45-48:



IV. New Apportionment of the Land among the Tribes (47:1-48:35)

Note the map above for these land apportionment. The topography of the city does not correspond with the city of Jerusalem today, but of course, this is not a huge problem if the city was relocated or if significant land changes occur.

47:1-12 is sometimes called the vision of the living waters. The Life Applications Bible footnote for this section is: "This river is similar to the river mentioned in Revelation 22:1-2. Both rivers are associated with the river in the Garden of Eden. The river symbolizes life from God and the blessings that flow from the throne. It is a gentle, safe, deep river, expanding as it flows."

48:35 "The distance all around will be 18,000 cubits. "And the name of the city from that time on will be: THE LORD IS THERE." NIV

Other than this, the actual name is not given for the city, but many believe that it would be New Jerusalem. Its name is Yahweh Shammah! Ezekiel begins with the exiles despondent that they have apparently been moved from Judah and away from God. Through Ezekiel, God tells them that they worse fears of continued Diaspora will happen. The book ends with total reconciliation...what a promise from God to the Jews through Ezekiel.