

NOVEMBER 20

Remember to take a look at the "Millennial Temple" at the end of this document.

Ezekiel 40:28-41:26

If you're like me, you don't have as many observations as you do questions from all of this detail.

First, if the temple was already built, why did the angel measure everything with Ezekiel? There is some importance in Ezekiel seeing him measure everything firsthand. I'm sure the angel was "online" with God and could have just said how long, tall and thick everything was. The audience of Ezekiel's prophecy was to have been impressed too. Also, as Ezekiel is taken on this tour and verbally related it (before writing it down), it may have been a "you had to be there" kind of experience, where it was so well communicated orally that it was actually like being there. To alter an idiom, the hearers may have been "spirit-bound."

Second, in the measurements there is repetition. Verse 28 says the south gate was the same size as the other gates, but even here, the angel measured it first. You find eight steps a lot. There is apparently an order and symmetry about everything. It might be worth looking at the diagram of the Millennial Temple and making arrows as you read to trace Ezekiel's journey.

Third, why all the mention of sacrifices?

The sacrifices of Israel were never for the forgiveness of sins (only Christ's sacrifice could do that), but for a faith-inspired obedience looking for the future fulfillment of forgiven sin. *For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.* (Heb. 10:4) For the church today, we have the Lord's Supper as a remembrance and memorial of what Jesus did. We are not Israel and so the Levitical sacrifices were not for us. Jesus did say that the celebration of the Lord's Supper was just until His return. Apparently in the Millennium, which will have a very Jewish focus to it, and in which, Israel will fulfill its service before the Lord, sacrifices will be a memorial remembrance of what Christ did on the cross. The sacrifices belong to the Jews and this will be a way for them to celebrate and remember His sacrifice.

As for the need of a memorial to remember Christ's death, even though Jesus is there, remember that once the Tribulation is over and Jesus is sitting on the throne, people will begin to see Him as any other political figure. Pictures of Him will look like a man. The Millennium will be 1000 years. After twenty years people will forget what happened and a new generation will grow up, only hearing about the Tribulation and Christ's coming. There will still be sin in each person, and each person will have to believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God who died to save them. One of the purposes of the Millennium will be to prove to mankind that our real problem is sin, not Satan. Satan will be bound for those thousand years, but rebellion toward "that guy on the throne" will grow. Therefore, in Jerusalem all nations will be told to come to visit and to take part in the memorial commemorating the sacrificial death of the Lamb of God. Apparently toward the end of the Millennium, some nations/people will refuse. See Zechariah 14:16-17.

Ezekiel 40:28-49

Vs. 28-31 From the south gate of the outer court, the angel led Ezekiel across the outer court to the south gate of the inner court. This gate was a mirror image of the south gate of the outer court, that is, identical but exactly the opposite. If you look at the diagram of the Millennial Temple you can see this. To get into the temple you had to go up eight steps. I have a feeling that with the Lord present, there will be little concern for handicapped friendly structures.

Vs. 32-34 Now in the inner court, Ezekiel is led from the south gate to the east gate.

Vs. 35-37 This is now the north gate. If you're looking at the diagram of the temple, you can see that Ezekiel and his guide have made a semi-circle around the altar.

Vs. 38-43 If I understand this properly, the vestibule of the gates to the inner court is the large opening on the inside of the gate, like a foyer or entryway, as you enter from the outer court. This is where the sacrifices would be killed and prepared for sacrifice. Again, this sacrifice will only be in memorial. It is funny to think that people will need any memorial, but even though they will have Jesus there, they still have to believe that He died for them and rose again. Once people see Jesus, as time goes on for 1000 years, I'm sure because of sin, people will treat Jesus as common place. The memorial sacrifices are to help people remember that it took a death and blood to purchase their redemption. Still, when Satan is released after 1000 years, he will find rebellious hearts all over the planet. See Revelation 20:7-9.

Vs. 44-47 These are chambers for priests to make themselves ready. I doubt they'll have Coke machines and candy bar machines in there, but who knows.

Vs. 48-49 Now Ezekiel is standing before the steps leading into the temple proper.

Ezekiel 41

See the diagram of the "The Millennial Temple Proper" at the end of this document.

Vs. 1-4 So what happens here is that the angel takes Ezekiel into the temple proper. Ezekiel was led into the temple from the steps on the lower end of the diagram. The angel led Ezekiel through the entry or nave. Since Ezekiel was a priest, he could go into the large long room, the outer sanctuary; but only the angel could go into the inner room, the Most Holy Place. The doorways get progressively narrower.

Vs. 5-11 These are three levels of side rooms for storage. I can't visualize this, especially how to get to those rooms.

V. 12 This huge building/room is mentioned, but it is never said what goes on in there. Is it a spare room or will someone live in it?

Vs. 13-26 In the temple, in the room before the Most Holy Place, there was a lot of carving of palm trees and cherubim. The only piece of furniture is a wooden table. Interestingly, it is not covered with gold like the furniture in the tabernacle was. In the tabernacle and temple, in the Holy Place before the Most Holy Place, there was a lampstand, the table of the bread of the Presence and the altar of incense. All of these were made with or covered with gold. Some might suggest that this is the altar of incense, but that isn't said to be its purpose. It is simply the wooden table that is before the Lord. Maybe it's the first table Jesus made as a carpenter.

Nothing is described inside the Most Holy Place where the ark of the covenant stood. The ark has been missing since the days of Hezekiah or Manasseh. Thanks to Indiana Jones, we know the ark is safely hidden in some undisclosed government warehouse, probably in Ohio.

We are not yet done with all of the descriptions, but it is safe to assume that when the people and leaders got all of this information, they began asking their own questions and trying to understand the shapes and dimensions of everything. And to think, this will stand for 1000 years, and then come the new heavens and new earth.

James 4

Vs. 1-4 We have seen the idea of adultery used before. It signals the idea of belonging to God, but living by one's own desires and so using His blessings to live for ourselves. Being faithful means that our devotion should be wholly for the Lord. If something else takes the place in our hearts that only God should own, He calls that adultery. We normally face these temptations, but in stress and hard times, the temptation only grows deeper. We read about church fighting in 1 Corinthians 3:1-3. Paul's comment to them was that they were not behaving like spiritual men, but as men of the flesh, as babes in Christ. I think that is what was happening here too.

Remember too that in Hebrews 10:34, it mentions that at one time, in those early days of faith, those believers were willing to allow their property to be taken. That was no longer the case with the Hebrews and I'm guessing it was not the situation here either. They had been mature, but regressed. Hard times, without a fresh love for Christ ruling our hearts, can make us redefine following Christ to include a life lived for earth stuff and to exclude carrying a cross.

Also, Jesus mentioned to His disciples that when they faced persecution, the hardship would cause many professing believers to ... *fall away and betray one another and hate one another*. (Matt. 24:10) I think this is what was happening to these believers as they faced persecution.

Vs. 5-10 This makes me think of Paul's reminders to the Christians in 1 Corinthians 3:16 and 6:19, that their body was a *temple of the Holy Spirit*. God jealously watches over His own. The rest of this sounds like Peter talking about our *adversary the devil* (1 Peter 5:8) and humbling ourselves *under the mighty hand of God* (1 Peter 5:6). Not only did these apostles know one another and face similar problems in churches, they were all inspired by the same Author of the Bible.

Vs. 11-12 In those same lessons to His disciples Jesus warned His disciples about condemning and judging others (Luke 6:37). When our hearts hold on to stuff, and when we cannot accept that God brings hard circumstances into our lives to show His love through us, we become angry, bitter and complaining toward others and toward God too.

Vs. 13-17 As those who were dead and have been given life by the death and resurrection of our Savior, it ought to be a crime to live for ourselves and not for Him. This is the intent here. Our lives are not our own and the life we live is to be lived following the Spirit, not our plans. As Paul said to Timothy in 2 Timothy 2:4, we live under the orders of *the one who enlisted us*, and our life's desire should be to satisfy Him. In this case here, it appears that these are rich people who were living above the circumstances because of their money. Therefore, they didn't have to be dependent on God for how they lived or for what they wanted.

To me it is interesting to see that all of the discipleship teaching of Jesus, Paul, and James flows together. The look and adornments of our cultures have changed, but disciples today face the same debilitating temptations to become neutralized as disciples did back then.

Psalm 118:19-29

Vs. 19-20 You have to admit it is a little coincidental that we're reading so much about the temple structure, and here we have gates and a stone and an entrance of a king. The joy and thanksgiving are because of this king, and the way to enter into God's presence is by giving thanks expressed with joy. This desire to enter into the presence of the Lord is always found in David. His ultimate desire was to be with God. Long years of running created this longing in his heart.

Vs. 21-23 These verses must have applied to David. Saul and his men wanted to get rid of David, but as often as they tried to reject him, kill him and drive him off, God kept bringing David back and saving him. Isn't it amazing then that Jesus and Peter quoted these verses regarding the Jews casting away their Messiah?

V. 24 The day when that rejected *cornerstone* was exalted was a great day.

V. 25 And so where does that success and salvation come from?

V. 26 This is what Jesus said the people would cry out during the Tribulation, showing their humility in needing Him. Their shouting of this prayer will begin the process of His return to Jerusalem. It will begin the salvation and success of the future Israel.

V. 27 God made His face to shine upon us by binding the sacrifice, figuratively speaking, to *the horns of the altar*. The horns of the altar were to be grasped by those pleading for mercy and forgiveness. How could David have had these thoughts other than the Holy Spirit inspiring him?

Vs. 28-29 This seems to be the universal praise of the redeemed and those who follow in the harvest.

What a great psalm! He'll return in the future and today we have the joy of letting people know they need to be ready.

Proverbs 28:3-5

These verses continue the theme of a land full of transgression.

V. 3 In this land, the poor have no compassion for other poor.

V. 4 The heroes of this land are like the people praising them, the wicked. But there are still people who keep the laws and work against this lawlessness.

V. 5 Seeking the Lord is what keeps the disciples on target, knowing right from wrong when everyone else has no clue.

In all of this, it shows the importance of those who know the Lord to be active, reaching out and making disciples, who make disciples.