

NOVEMBER 21

Ezekiel 42-43

Ezekiel 42

Vs. 1-14 Since there will be active sacrifice in this temple, there are chambers for the priests during the time they are serving. When Israel was following the Lord, the Lord was always present in the temple when the priests carried out their duties. During the Millennium both Jesus and the resurrected King David will be present and visible in the temple area. On the one hand, that will be amazing. On the other hand, I wonder if the priests will begin to take things for granted. As they say, "familiarity breeds contempt."

Vs. 15-20 This is the entire area of the temple. Apparently the area will be big enough for 13 football fields, suggesting of course, as we all know, that soccer (real football) is the sport of heaven.

Ezekiel 43

Vs. 1-5 It is interesting that Ezekiel witnessed *the glory of the Lord* so often. I wonder if this helped offset the sadness of his ministry. Now with the description of the temple complete, the Lord was returning to the temple.

Vs. 6-9 God is speaking to Ezekiel and it is interesting that he is seeing a vision of future glory and splendor, but God speaks to him of the present cleansing of the people. In the Millennial Kingdom the Lord will set up His throne here, and unlike the tabernacle and temple, this place will never be desecrated. The Lord will know the hearts and intents of all who approach Him. They won't need metal detectors or "evil heart" detectors. That generation of Israel will be cleansed, but the cleansing was beginning now, with Ezekiel's generation. In the future, no deceit will be allowed to enter God's presence. We are so used to living hidden lives with secret sin. There will be forgiveness during the Millennium, but there won't be any lying or hiding before His throne. That will freak out a lot of people. And it seems that once they are 500 to 600 years into the Millennium, there will be a growing sense of rebellion and dissatisfaction.

Vs. 10-12 As Ezekiel described this temple in all its detail to the people, God expected the people to be ashamed. Why do you think that was?

Vs. 13-27 This is the altar and its consecration. If there was ever any doubt that there will be sacrifice during the Millennial Kingdom, this should dispel it. Again, these sacrifices will be a remembrance of what Christ did. Salvation will still be by personal faith in Christ.

We don't have much detail as to what life will be like during the thousand-year reign of Jesus on earth. This shows that there will be need for a constant, visual reminder to the people on earth that Jesus sacrificed Himself for sin. Once Jesus is seated on the throne, He will become "that guy" ruling the world from Jerusalem. People will forget the seven years of the Tribulation and the display of God's power, just like the people of Israel forgot the wonder of the Exodus. People will still be people and sin will still reject God. Although Satan will be locked up, the heart of man will still be sinful. In spite of a perfect government and direct access to the Lord, there will still be unbelief and rebellion at the end of the Millennium. True faith and trusting Christ will still be a choice. With the depth of sin we bear, even seeing doesn't mean believing. We are sicker than we think, and we don't need the devil in order to dishonor God and find our way to hell.

It is amazing to think that with Jesus present, people will still reject Him. But even more amazing is to think that we can go into the harvest with the message of Christ; and without seeing Him, people will become devoted followers of Christ, disciples, who make disciples.

Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed." (John 20:29)

James 5

Vs. 1-6 Remember that in chapters 1 & 2, James had lots of negative things to say about the rich. According to James 2:6, the rich were also part of the hard times these believers were facing. It fits then that James aims some of his concluding remarks toward these people. He has just mentioned the rich at the end of chapter 4 in terms of their arrogance. It may be that there were some of the rich in the church, but it seems this condemnation and rebuke was meant to strengthen the hearts of the believers who were being oppressed by the rich Jews who were outside the church. They were reminded that God would repay these people.

Vs. 7-11 James calls the believers back to suffering and to waiting for the Lord with patience and humility. His use of Job is very much on target. As Job was suffering, it was his "rich" friends who were aggravating his problem and making it hard for him to endure. Notice in this exhortation the mention of the farmer. I'll bet James heard that from big brother Jesus. Verses 8-9 sound like Paul in Philippians 2:14 and 4:5. Same spiritual Author.

Vs. 12-20 It seems here that James is warning them not to invoke oaths before God or to make promises such as, "Lord if you do this, then I'll do that." Instead of bargaining, they were simply to draw close to one another and pray. Ron Blue's explanation of this in the [Bible Knowledge Commentary-OT](#), pp. 833-835, is very good.

V. 14 The word used for sick is also used to mean weak or heartsick. The anointing is also the same as that used to encourage or welcome a guest. This is an interesting wrinkle. Another way of looking at this would be that if a believer was really discouraged, weak in faith, thinking of defecting from the group, they should call the elders and have the elders encourage them. In other words, this can be understood without the person being physically sick and the anointing can mean to refresh a person's heart. I've anointed people with oil who were sick. In the last case, the physical problem was really a problem of being heartsick. They were cured, but only after moving away from the oppressive atmosphere that had been created by some very contentious believers.

It seems that the focus here is for the believers who are discouraged to draw together, and for the rest of the group to reach out to them and draw them in.

V. 16 This healing is of the soul, a lifting of the heart, and for protection from damage. It is the same word as in Hebrews 12:13; and, in fact, the situations of both verses might be very similar, *and make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be put out of joint but rather be healed.*

So, why is the example of Elijah used? Notice the result in v. 18. His prayer brought restoration and new life to the land. It seems clear that the idea in the conclusion of this letter is for the church to bind together to get through the stress and discouragement they were facing.

V. 20 This is a rather abrupt conclusion if compared to Paul's letters. The wandering one in view here is a believer. If you look at 1 Timothy, you'll find Paul telling Timothy about all sorts of believers wandering from the faith. In fact, in 1 Timothy 6 Paul talks about believers who went astray, seeking wealth and comfort.

But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs. (1 Tim. 6:9-10)

The idea here is for the church to go after its members who have wandered away because of the discouragement and persecution they have faced. They are in danger of wrecking their walk on

earth for Christ. In helping these wanderers, the forgiveness the wanderers receive will help them recover from the guilt of the sins they have committed.

Think of a group of believers reaching out to those who have been morally ruined and who have committed acts for which they might not be able to forget or forgive themselves. The church's restoration, help, and forgiveness can help them cover and recover from that guilt. This is also a part of the work we do in the harvest making disciples. Sometimes we need to restore fallen disciples to make them disciples who follow in the harvest, making disciples, who make disciples.

Psalm 119:1-16

Like most of the psalms of David, this is the celebratory introduction to the psalm. The nitty-gritty is coming. In many places David was discouraged and stressed as he wrote this. He had the same problem as the people in Hebrews and in James. What is it that will keep his faith solid and refreshed as he waits on the deliverance of the Lord? We'll see.

This introduction gives you David's answer, and it is my answer, and it is your answer. It is God's answer. Christ doesn't call us to follow Him without suffering. He Himself suffered. Jesus calls us to Himself as we follow Him in the harvest. And we find Him in His Word. That's why we're reading this stuff, right? To draw close to our Shepherd.

Vs. 1-3 This is the summary declaration of what it means to be blameless before the Lord. It doesn't mean perfection; it means having our feet constantly cleansed by the Word.

Vs. 4-8 Notice how many ways the Word is referred to. Also, notice that part of the obedience to the Word is expressed as praise to God for His Word. The closer we draw to the Word, the more we understand our need and what it is God does for us in His Word.

Vs. 9-16 Verse 9 is the question that is answered in this section. Notice all the body parts that get involved with the Word. None of this is a 100% guarantee that we will stay faithful to the Lord, but it will keep us closer to Him than if we were indifferent to His Word. We all fall, but even after David fell, this devotion to the Word is what brought his broken heart back to God. David was restored and remained for the rest of his life, a man after God's own heart.

Proverbs 28:6-7

Amen.