

# Earth's Ultimate Centre – God's Kingdom Restored to Divine Residence

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Date: 05 May 2024

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[ 0 : 00 ] and shortly in our service willie will be preaching to us on quite a long section of the book from chapters 40 to 43 and we won't have time to read the whole three and a half chapters just now but perhaps later when we pause for a time of quiet during our offering you might want to look over the parts that we skip and summarize here let me just say before we read that chapters 40 to 48 of ezekeiel it's really one long vision of what it will be like when what was promised at the end of chapter 37 will be fulfilled that's when the lord said my sanctuary is in their midst forever in other words this section of the book is a picture of a renewed and perfect dwelling place of god with his people forever what a read it is and with that in mind let's turn to god's word let's begin reading the chapter 40 verse 1 hear the word of the lord in the 25th year of our exile at the beginning of the year on the 10th day of the month in the 14th year after the 14th year after the city was struck down on that very day the hand of the lord was upon me and he brought me to the city in visions of god he brought me to the land of israel and set me down on a very high mountain on which was a structure like a city to the south when he brought me to the north when he brought me there behold there was a man whose appearance was like bronze with a linen cord and a measuring reed in his hand and he was standing in the gateway and the man said to me son of man look with your eyes and hear with your ears and set your heart upon all that i shall show you for you were brought here in order that i might show it to you declare all that you see to the house of israel and behold there was a wall all around the outside of the temple area and the length of the measuring reed in the man's hand was six long cubits each being a cubit and a hundred in length so he measured the thickness of the wall one reed and the height one reed then he went into the gateway facing east going up at steps and measured the threshold of the gate one reed deep and the side rooms one reed long and one reed broad and the space between the side rooms five cubits and the threshold of the gate by the vestibule of the gate at the inner end one reed then he measured the vestibule of the gateway on the inside one reed then he measured the vestibule of the gateway eight cubits and it's jams two cubits and the vestibule of the gate was at the inner end and there were three side rooms on either side of the east gate the three were of the same size and the jams on either side were of the same size then he measured the width of the opening of the gateway ten cubits and the length of the gateway thirteen cubits there was a barrier before the side one cubit on either side and the side rooms were six cubits on either side then he measured the gate

from the ceiling of the one side room to the ceiling of the other a breadth of twenty-five cubits the openings faced each other he measured also the vestibule twenty cubits and around the vestibule of the gateway was the court from the front of the gate at the entrance to the front of the inner vestibule of the gate was fifty cubits and the gateway had windows all around narrowing inwards toward the side rooms and toward their jams and likewise the vestibule had windows all around inside and on the jams were palm trees and then if you were to read on you'll find that ezekeiel is then shown all around the outer court of the temple and then the inner court with the gates and stairways all being carefully measured and finally to the actual central temple building let's pick up our reading in verse 48 please verse 48 of chapter 40 then he brought me to the vestibule of the temple and measured the jams of the vestibule five cubits on either side and the breadth of the gate was 14 cubits and the side walls of the gate were three cubits on either side the length of the vestibule was 20 cubits and the breadth it's 12 cubits and people would go up to it by 10 steps and there were pillars beside the jams one on either side then he brought me to the nave and measured the jams on each side six cubits was the breadth of the jams and the breadth of the entrance was 10 cubits and the side walls of the entrance were five cubits on either side and he measured the

length of the side side of the side of the entrance then he went into the inner room and measured the jams of the entrance two cubits and the entrance six cubits and the side walls on either side of the entrance seven cubits and he measured the length of the room 20 cubits and its breadth 20 cubits across the nave and he said to me this is the most holy place and then the rest of chapter 41 and much of 42 you find that there's measures and descriptions of the temple building with an emphasis on its many rooms and its beautiful decorations and its fitting holiness for god's dwelling and chapter 42 ends pretty much where chapter 40 began describing the vast area of these temple courts and then we get to chapter 43 and chapter 43 describes the glorious return of the lord to this new temple let's pick up our reading at chapter 42 verse 15 now when he had finished measuring the interior of the temple area he led me out by the gate that faced east and measured the temple area all around he measured the east side with the measuring reed 500 cubits by the measuring reed all around he measured the north side 500 cubits by the measuring reed he measured the south side 500 cubits by the measuring reed then he turned to the west side and measured 500 cubits by the measuring reed he measured it on the four sides It had a wall around it, 500 cubits long and 500 cubits broad, to make a separation between the holy and the common.

Then he led me to the gate, the gate facing east. And behold, the glory of the God of Israel was coming from the east. And the sound of his coming was like the sound of many waters.

And the earth shone with his glory. And the vision I saw was just like the vision that I had seen when he came to destroy the city. And just like the vision that I had seen by the Kibar Canal.

[ 8 : 59 ] And I fell on my face. As the glory of the Lord entered the temple by the gate facing east, the Spirit lifted me up and brought me into the inner court.

And behold, the glory of the Lord filled the temple. While the man was standing beside me, I heard one speaking to me out of the temple.

And he said to me, Son of man, this is the place of my throne. And the place of the soles of my feet. Where I will dwell in the midst of the people of Israel forever.

And the house of Israel shall no more defile my holy name. Neither they nor their kings by their whoring and by their dead bodies of their kings at their high places.

By setting their thresholds by my thresholds and their doorposts beside my doorposts. With only a wall between me and them. They have defiled my holy name by their abominations that they have committed.

[ 10 : 07 ] So I have consumed them in my anger. Now let them put away their whoring. And the dead bodies of their kings far from me.

And I will dwell in their midst forever. As for you, son of man, describe to the house of Israel the temple.

That they may be ashamed of their iniquities. And they shall measure the plan. And if they are ashamed of all that they have done. Make known to them the design of the temple.

Its arrangement. Its exits and its entrances. That is its whole design. And make known to them as well all its statutes.

And its whole design. And all its laws. And write it down in their sight. So that they may observe all that its laws. And all its statutes.

[ 11 : 09 ] And carry them out. This is the law of the temple. The whole territory on top of the mountain. All around shall be most holy.

Behold. This is the law of the temple. Well, amen. And may God bless to us. This, his words. Will do turn with me to these chapters that we read in Ezekiel.

Beginning at chapter 40. Now, way back before even the first Israelites entered the land of Canaan. Moses foresaw the tragic end of the former days of Israel's history. In a punitive exile. To the utter scorn of all the surrounding nations.

But lest those nations should think that God was wicked in abandoning his covenant. Or just weak in being unable to deliver his promises.

[ 12 : 13 ] Moses also declared that in the latter days. He said the Lord will vindicate his people. And have compassion on his servants. When he sees their power is gone.

Deuteronomy 32 verse 36. And indeed he also says in that chapter that on that day. The nations will rejoice alongside God's people.

When he cleanses his people's land. And he says to his people. This is no empty word for you. This is your very life. This is the unbreakable covenant promise.

Of almighty God. And it's the beginning of the fulfillment of these words. That we have been reading about. Through these later chapters of Ezekiel.

The relentless oracles of judgment. First, the realization. That the truth was. The exile's power had gone. The nation was ravaged.

[13:20] God's city. God's temple had been destroyed. And that had demonstrated beyond all uncertainty. That their power was utterly gone.

Only a divine miracle. Could possibly offer them any hope. But of course that is. What God promised through Ezekiel. In these chapters. From chapter 34 onwards.

The wonderful climax of those oracles of hope. Came at the end of chapter 37. Where God promises a vast regathering. Of all of his people. From all the nations.

Raised from their graves. And under the rule of his eternal king. Knowing a new life forevermore. And that life would be forever. Because he says.

God's dwelling would be in the midst of his people. As the life giver. The source of life. Chapter 37 ends. That all of this will be. When my sanctuary is among them.

[14:16] Forevermore. And nothing will be able to. To hinder. That from happening. Not even as we saw last time. All the. The massed enemies of God.

And his people from all the world over. Nor the. Devilish evil. From all the universe combined. That's what's represented. By these massed forces. Of Gog. From Magog. That we saw.

In chapters 38 and 39. But all of that even. Is utterly in the hand of God. In fact. It's God himself.

Who draws out. All those enemies. And all that evil. In order to make a complete end of them.

The complete. Defeat. Of all enemies. And the complete destruction. Of all evil. Forever. Forever.

And now. After all of that. From chapter 40.

Right to the very end. In this final great vision of the book. Ezekiel. Pictures. The great unveiling. Of God's kingdom. Finally restored. To what it should be. And what it shall be.

[15:13] The place where. Earth's ultimate center. Is his. Divine. Residence. Once again. That's what it means. That God's dwelling place.

Is with his people. Forever. Forever. That's what it means. As chapter 39. Ended. That God will not hide his face. From them anymore.

That he will pour out his spirit. Upon all his people. Only. When earth's. Ultimate center. Is restored. With the return. Of the Lord himself.

Only then. With the return of the Lord himself. Will be the true return. Of life itself. As God means. It to be. For his people. And for his world. It's the final divine return.

That leads. To the final divine. Recreation. And that's what. Ezekiel 40 to 48. Pictures for us.

Return. Of the Lord's. Truly wonderful presence.

[16:10] As we see. In chapter 40 to 43. Halfway through. That leads. To the restoration. Of a truly worshipping. People. From midway through. Chapter 43.

To the end of chapter 46. And therefore. That leads. To the final reordering. Of the whole world. At peace. As the last two chapters show us.

It's one long vision. It's the longest. In the Bible. Outside. The book of Revelation. It's full of some. Quite confusing. Details. Nine chapters. All full of measurements.

And so on. Numbers. We've got to be careful. We don't get bogged down. In that. But we need to keep the big picture. In view. What these chapters are telling us. Is that it will be God's.

Wonderful presence. Alone. On this earth. That will restore. God's worshipping people. And will bring about. At last. A world truly at peace. God's wonderful presence.

[17:05] Restoring his worshipping people. To a world truly at peace. That's all you remember.

From these chapters. That's the main thing. So remember that. Even if we get lost. In the measurements. Well I think my best.

Over the next week. Or two. To try and help us see it. More clearly. And today we're going to focus.

On these three and a half chapters. To the middle of. Chapter 43. And I think the message here.

Is really quite clear. All of this. Will begin. Only when. God's kingdom is restored. To his. Divine residence.

When that is. Once again. Earth's. Ultimate center. So first of all. Let's. Let's walk with Ezekiel.

Through chapters 40 to 42. Where his. Visionary messenger.

Brings him. On a tour. Of God's ultimate residence. The ultimate residence. For a holy God. That's what these chapters. Are showing us. Verse 1.

[17:59] Chapter 40. Tells us the vision. Comes in the 25th year. Of exile. Which makes it. Around 573 BC. 20 years. After. The hand of the Lord.

First came on Ezekiel. Way back in chapter 1. 14 years. We're told here. After. The destruction. Of Jerusalem. And the last time. That God's hand. Came upon Ezekiel.

With a vision like this. Was just before. The destruction of Jerusalem. And you remember. He showed him. In advance. That terrible. Terrible tragedy. God's glory. Departing.

From his temple. And from his city. Going out. To the east. Into the wilderness. Beyond. And that's how the. The vision. In chapter 11.

Ended. Chapters 8 to 11. Showed all of that. Utterly. Appalling. To Ezekiel. But now. He's going to see. The complete. Reversal. Of all of that.

[18:54] And as we'll see. Chapter 43. Depicts God's glory. Returning. Again. From the east. Coming back. To reside. Inside. His temple. But first. That residence.

Must be properly. Restored. And that's what. Ezekiel's going to be shown. Notice verse 2. It's a vision. It's a vision. We're not to treat this. As a literalistic.

Description. The very nature of it. Is it's apocalyptic. Imagery. This is not. A set of. Architectural. Drawings. That are to be followed. It's an artist's impression.

That we're to be impressed by. When the exiles. Did eventually return. To the earthly. Jerusalem. They didn't build a temple. That followed. This plan at all. They built something.

Very like Solomon's original. That had been given. With very clear instructions. Going way back to God. Telling Moses. Exactly how to build. The earthly tabernacle. But what Ezekiel sees here.

[19:50] Is something quite different. This is something God himself. Has built. And is unveiling. In all of its glory. Nor is it merely. An earthly city. Look at verse 2.

In visions. He's brought. To. To. A very high mountain. And to its south. Was a structure. Like a city. Jerusalem is not actually.

Mentioned by name. In fact. At the end of verse 1. You'll see the footnote. Just says. He brought me there. Doesn't mention the city. Jerusalem wasn't built. On a very high mountain. It was often.

regarded as being. The highest mountain of all. Because. It was the highest place on earth. It held. The dwelling place. Of God. But it wasn't actually. A very high mountain.

And. Indeed. When you get to Revelation. Chapter 21. In verse 10. You'll read there. That John is carried. In the spirit. Where? To a very high mountain. And from there.

[20:47] He sees. The heavenly city. Of God. The new Jerusalem. Descending. From heaven. To God. And of course. We've seen in Revelation. With Paul. That there's so much. That's lifted directly.

Out of Ezekiel. And that's because. They're talking about. The same. Ultimate things. And so it is here. Here. Is. An extraordinary place.

Like a city. South of a very high mountain. The mountain of God. The city of God. For the future. And note the purpose. Verse 4. Ezekiel's to look.

With his eyes. He's to hear. With his ears. And to set his heart. On everything that God shows him. Why? In order that he can declare it. To all God's people. To give them.

A great revelation. Of hope. About the future. To bring hope. Of God's great. Coming reversal. And renewal. Which is going to last forever.

[21:42] And he's to speak to them. Of a city. And of a temple. That is vastly better. Vastly bigger than anything. They've ever known. Perfect. Perfect. In every way. Not. Rebuilt.

By humans. But perfected. By God himself. Having set aside. All human effort. Having seen. That their power. Is utterly gone. And all that follows.

You see. Is to give an overwhelming. Impression. Of the grandeur. Of the glory. Of the restoration. Of God's. Permanent presence. In the midst. That he promised.

At the end of chapter 37. Would be forever more. Five times. When all God's people. Are gathered. From all the earth. Through resurrection. Under one king.

Forever. In this eternal. Covenant of peace. And then. Do you remember God said. Then the nations. Will know. That I am the Lord. Who sanctifies Israel. Who makes them holy.

[22:37] When my. Holy sanctuary. Is in the midst of them. Forever. And that's what this is about. It's about. Earth's. Ultimate center. Being.

Restored. Not just. Israel's exile. Over. But mankind's. Exile. Being brought to an end. The whole earth. Lost its.

Its center of glory. When man first. Defiled God's dwelling place. On earth. In Eden. But now.

Here's. Here's Ezekiel. Being shown. The great unveiling. Of a truly. Restored.

Residence. Fit. Fit. For a holy God. God. And he's doing that. In order that. Ezekiel can proclaim.

This great future hope. To his people. Let's follow Ezekiel.

Try and get some of the highlights. Of his tour. Clear to us. First of all. Let's focus on these measurements. Verse five. Tells us. Of this measuring reed. Or measuring rod. Six royal cubits long.

[ 23 : 32 ] A cubit. Plus a handsbread. That's a cubit. That's from the elbow. To the fingertips. Plus a handsbread. There. About ten and a half feet. These old measurements. You know. Were very sensible.

Weren't they? You didn't need rulers. All you needed was arms. And fingers. And feet. And so on. Very easy to measure things. It was Napoleon. We have to blame. For the metric system. But that's another story.

Doesn't do it much credit. Anyway. This measuring reed. Gets an awful lot of use. Look at it. So he measured. And then he measured. And then he measured. On and on it goes. Everything is measured.

And he begins with these walls. Around the perimeter. Of the temple area. Verse 5. And closing these outer courts. And the wall's thickness. And the height is measured. It's one reed.

Over ten feet. Thick and high. Thicker and higher than the old temple. Impregnable. To enemies. Indestructible. And also impenetrable.

[ 24 : 27 ] You can't get through them. Except through the gates. If you turn to the very last paragraph. Of chapter 42. That we read. Verses 15 to 20. You'll see that. The measuring ends.

Where it begins. With these. Perimeter walls. And the point is. That the circumference. Is huge. Now most modern versions. Like the ESV. You'll see.

Say 500 cubits. By the rod. Each side square. If you've got an authorized version. You'll see. It just says 500 reeds. And I think that's the right way.

To read. The Hebrew text here. It's been. Amended. Because. There's some difficulty. In the original text. But the main reason. Is that many scholars. Just think. That that can't possibly.

Be as big as that. Because. It doesn't fit. With all the other dimensions. And in any case. That would make this temple. Far far bigger. And unable to fit. On the temple mount. But.

[ 25 : 25 ] Palmer Robertson. Argies. I think. Very persuasively. For the reading. 500 reeds. As does Patrick Fairbairn. And he reminds us. That this is a vision. It's not a literalistic.

Blueprint. And he says. Look. This is extravagance. It has the same purpose. As many of. Ezekiel's other extravagances. Like the things we saw last week. In chapters 38 and 39.

So that we as readers. He says. Are forced. To look. For something else. Than a literal.

Accomplishment. This is not. An earthly temple.

To be rebuilt. And if. If the reading is right. That it's 500 reeds. That means that it's. More than 5,000 feet. Square.

That means that the temple. Is bigger by far. Than the whole. Of earthly Jerusalem. Just as the borders. Of the new city. As we'll see later on. In the later chapters.

[ 26 : 21 ] Were so large. That actually. They would fill. Nearly the whole. Of the land of Palestine. And I think. What the point here is. Is simple. The new temple.

God's forever. Residence. Is. Is become much bigger. Or at least. Has become one. With the whole city. The whole land. Almost. Notice the last line.

Of chapter 42. The purpose of the wall. Is to make a separation. Between the holy. And the common.

A separation. There's an exclusiveness. To God's dwelling. All that is unholy. Must be kept outside. And yet. There's also a wonderful. Inclusiveness.

Because there is a vast. Vast. Space. Within. For those who are made holy. And who enter.

Through the gates. To God's holy dwelling place. So that's the walls.

[ 27 : 19 ] Secondly. That theme of. Of holiness. Leads us to another. Feature. That's very much highlighted. In these chapters. And that's the various different levels. Going up different steps.

Look at chapter 40. Verse 6. It shows that there are steps up. From the outside. Into this. Outer temple area. And verse 22. And verse 26.

Tell us. That those. Staircases have seven steps. Then if you look at verse 28. He goes. From the outer court. Into the inner court. Up another stairway.

And this stairway has. Eight steps. Verse 31. More steps. Because it's taking you up. To a higher level of holiness. And finally. In verse 48.

You see. He's taken up again. To the vestibule. Of the actual temple building. The holy place. And notice verse 49. This staircase has. Ten steps. Up to the holiest place.

[ 28 : 12 ] Of all. Indeed on the whole earth. And you see the same thing. With the gates. The closer you get. To the most holy place. The narrower. The gates.

Become. To restrict the access. More and more. So the outer gates. Verse 48. Are 14 cubits wide. Wide. The inner gates. To the temple building. In chapter 41.

Verse 2. Are 10 cubits wide. And then. Verse 3. Of chapter 41. The entrance. To the inner room. The most holy place. Narrowest of all. Six cubits. Narrow.

Is the gate. That leads to life. As Jesus said. And notice. Ezekiel. Can't. Can't actually go in. To the most holy place.

Even as a priest. That was only accessible. By the high priest. Remember. And only once. A year. And yet. The words. That are spoken to him.

[ 29 : 09 ] Do speak. Now. Of a wonderful. Nearness. Of God's people. To the holy lord. In the midst of his temple. He was told. That beginning to look. And to listen.

And most of it. Is looking. And seeing. And seeing all this. Measuring. And so on. But just four times. In these chapters. The messenger. Actually speaks. First of all. In chapter 40. Verse 45. And he said.

And it's all pointing out. The priests. Who were near. To the lord. To minister to him. And then chapter 41. Verse 4. He's told. This is the holy place.

The place where God himself. Dwells in the middle. In verse 42. Of chapter 41. He's pointed out. The lord's table. The place of the Lord. Of fellowship. And notice.

Around all of that. Is this. Wonderful decoration. Of the cherubim. And the trees. And remind us of Eden. And finally. In chapter 43. Verse 13. The words.

[ 30 : 06 ] Tell us of the purpose. Of the many rooms. That he had seen already. Around the holy place. They're for the priests. To eat these multiple holy offerings. In the near presence. Of God himself.

And the picture is. Is of everything. That's needed. For the true worship. Of a holy God. It's provided by God. And it's happening. In intimate fellowship.

With him. Once again. Even though there's. Quite a lot of things. To do with the old temple. That aren't mentioned here. There's no. Ark of the covenant.

For example. There's no gold lampstands. And lather. Just the simplicity. Look at. Verse. 42. Chapter 41. Verse 22. Wonderful simplicity.

An altar of wood. And a table. An altar. And a table. That's all that's needed.

[ 31 : 00 ] For an abundance of priests. It seems. To approach the Lord. And have fellowship with him. And these rooms. That are described. In chapter 42. From verse 13 today.

And these are the rooms. That are mentioned. Back in chapter 41. Verse 6. There were three stories. Each with 30 rooms. Ninety rooms. Ninety rooms. All around.

The holiest place. In the middle. Where the glory of God dwells. With immediate access. To his table. Isn't that striking? What did Jesus say?

In my father's house. Are. Many rooms. You read about them here. In Ezekiel. And notice the beauty. That's expressed.

In chapter 41. Verses 18 to 26. In particular. All these carvings. Of trees. And the cherubim. That represent all the created order. The whole beauty. Of Eden. And in verse 19.

[ 31 : 58 ] You've got human beings. Depicted also. As lion-like. A restoration. Of human majesty. And the symmetry.

Everywhere. As you read of these measurements. Epitomizes the. The beauty. Of divine. Order. In everything. It speaks of the. Utter perfection. Of God's plan.

For his restored people. God's. Blueprint. For his. People's future. With him. It's perfect. It's beautiful. In every. Possible. Respect.

And that should bring us. Encouragement. And hope. Shouldn't it? Just as I'm sure it brought. Great encouragement. And hope. To those. That Ezekiel spoke to at first. This future.

Wouldn't begin to unfold. At all. For them. For many generations yet. God. And yet. God. Had planned. Absolutely. Everything. With pure.

[ 32 : 56 ] Perfection. And wonderful beauty. It was absolutely assured. And so now. Having. Having seen. This vision. Of the ultimate. Residence.

For a holy God. In the midst of his people. He sees something now. That is. He must have longed for. But could barely. Have possibly hoped for. After the awful. Awful. Departure of God.

From the midst of his people. He sees. The ultimate. Return. Of a glorious God. Look at chapter 43. Verses 1 and 2. Ezekiel sees.

The complete. Reversal. Of the terrible image. That he'd seen. Back in. Chapter 11. Where God's glory. Departed. East. Out of the temple. Out of the city.

And now. Look. Behold. The glory of the God of Israel. Was coming. From the east. And the sound. Was deafening to him. The glory was. Dazzling. And just like in the previous visions.

[ 33 : 51 ] It had the same effect. It floored him. He fell on his face. For his three. He's as deeply affected. By the glory of God. At the age of 50. As he was. At the age of 30.

When he began his ministry. And that's a challenge. Isn't it? By the way. It's often in those middle years. Isn't it? That men. Particularly men. Both men and women.

But particularly men. Well. Their spiritual fervor. Is often blunted. Isn't it? He was conscious of the glory of God. In your 50s. As you were in your 30s. Or will you be? Well.

Ezekiel was. And he is sensitive to God's spirit. And God's spirit lifts him up. Verse 5. To see. The glory of God. Entering the temple. By the east gate. And the glory.

Filling. The temple. Now. Notice. This is. Not like. When. The very first time. In Exodus. 25 to 40. The tabernacle was built. And the glory of God.

[ 34 : 47 ] Descended. And filled the tabernacle. It's not even like. It was when Solomon. First built. His temple. And the glory filled it. This is. This is signifying. Something new. It's a return.

Of the glory of God. To its rightful place. It's a. It's a great. Reversal. Of the departure. That was caused by sin. Not just a reversal.

Of Israel's exile. But. But something even greater than that. That's why the east here. Is so significant. Why did. God's glory leave the temple.

And go east. By the way. Jesus. In Matthew 24. When he left the temple. And spoke about. It's coming ultimate destruction. The last earthly temple.

He also left to the east. To the Mount of Olives. Why that? Well. It goes all the way back to Eden. Mankind were cast out. Weren't they? Do you remember?

[ 35 : 42 ] To the east. And the flaming sword. Was set at the center. Of the gateway. To the east. Barring the way to Eden. Same again in Genesis chapter 4.

Do you remember? Cain went out from the presence of the Lord. And he went. And settled roaming. East. Of Eden. Cut off. From fellowship with God. It's highly symbolic. And here now you see.

Is God in all his glory. Returning to his earthly dwelling. To a home. That is decorated. With images of Eden's trees. And Eden's beauty. And everything that represents. Coming from the east.

Where he had never truly. And completely abandoned his people. But had wandered with them. In their exile. Right from very ancient times.

Even here in Babylon. Do you remember? Back in chapter 11. Verse 16. God said. I've been to them. A little sanctuary. A sanctuary in small measure. For a time. But now.

[ 36 : 38 ] My sanctuary. Will be in their midst. Forevermore. This is the end. This is the end. Being depicted. Of the great exile. Of all humanity.

From the presence of God. It's not just about. The people's return. To their land. There's no. Ark of God. In the rebuilt temple.

That they built. When they went back. There's no mercy seat. Therefore. There's no. Day of atonement. There's no real peace. With God. From that earthly temple. That was rebuilt. Now is there any record.

In the later scriptures. Of the glory of God. Once again. Descending and filling. The temple. As is pictured here. Now this is depicting. Something far.

Far greater. The complete. And ultimate. Restoration. Of the presence of God. On this earth. To make it. His dwelling place. Forever more. When will that be?

[ 37 : 37 ] And how? How? Well we'll come to that. But first. Notice. In verses 6 to 12 here. The vision. Of glory.

Gives way to words. And this time. The words are not from the messenger. But these words come right out of the holy place. These are words from God himself. Words of the utmost power.

And first of all. He says two things. But first. In verses 6 to 19. He gives. A sovereign promise. Of holiness. The message is enveloped in God's promise.

Verse 7. I will dwell in their midst forever. And verse 9. I will dwell in their midst forever. It's a promise. To bring heaven and earth together forever.

That's what the temple signified. Look at verse 7. It was the footstool. Of God's heavenly throne. It was a place where the soles of God's feet. Touched the earth. All the way down from his throne in heaven.

[ 38 : 38 ] Psalm 132 says. Let us go to his dwelling place. And worship at his footstool. That's what the temple was. Solomon knew when he built the temple. That the temple on earth couldn't contain God.

Heaven and the highest heaven can't contain you. How much less this house that I've built. He knew that. Yet. It was the place where heaven and earth met. And God's name dwelt there.

His presence could be encountered there. I dwell in the high and holy place. Says the Lord through Isaiah. But also.

With him. Was of a contrite and lowly spirit. On earth you see. And Isaiah also spoke about God's new heavens and the new earth.

And he talked about how heaven and earth would indeed be reunited permanently. They shall not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountains.

[ 39 : 38 ] Says the Lord. Heaven is my throne. And the earth. The whole earth. Is my footstool. The whole earth. Not just a mere temple. But the whole earth is his temple.

His dwelling place. Among his people. And that's exactly what Ezekiel also is seeing here. Actually Isaiah. There in Isaiah 66. Goes on to make clear that those who dwell with him.

Are the humble. The contrite in spirit. Who tremble at his word. And again. That is what Ezekiel is affirming here. Look at verse 9. See the true gospel of God's sovereign promise. Always demands. A true response to God's sovereign command to holiness. Let them put away. Their whoring. After other gods. And serve God truly. And him alone. That's what he's saying.

Describes how they defile God's name. By their idolatry. By their kings. Making themselves almost divine. To be worshipped. Perhaps their images being worshipped.

[ 40 : 36 ] In these high places. And that perverse worship. Is what always leads to perverse morality. Verse 8. The abominations. Which provoke God's anger.

Well that's not just the Israelites. Is it? That's been the heart of all humanity. Since our first rebellion. Turning to deceitful promises. Of the one who says he'll make us.

Like gods. To be worshipped. To decide good and evil ourselves. As if we were gods. But now you see God promises. God promises.

That his people will be holy. And he commands them. To be holy. God's gospel word is certain. He will do it. You will be holy. But it's not unconditional.

They must obey. And the same emphasis exactly. Is seen in verses 10 to 12. Which is a sovereign proclamation of hope. Verse 10.

[ 41 : 34 ] Describe to them. The temple. Put before them. This great ultimate hope. Of the future. But notice. What that will do. Do it so that they may be.

Ashamed. Of their iniquities. You see. And only if they are. Will they be able to measure. The plan. Verse 10. Only if they are ashamed. Of their iniquities. Penitent. Will they be able to see. And grasp. The real wonder. Of this great hope.

Of the future. If they are ashamed. Make known to them. Verse 11. The design. Of the whole temple. Only to the penitent. Only those. Who know that their power is gone.

Who know that they deserve. Only wrath. Only they can grasp. The grace. Of a holy sovereign salvation. Like this. And we have seen this before.

[ 42 : 31 ] Haven't we. In Ezekiel. On his great emphasis. On the people remembering. Their evil ways. Chapter 36. Verse 31. Or chapter 39. Verse 28. We saw last time.

Bearing their shame. Having a godly grief. Over their sin. Because remember. As Paul tells. The Corinthian church. It is that godly grief. That produces repentance.

That leads. To life. To salvation. God's grace. Is for the penitent. It can't be for the proud.

In their sin. It's only knowing. That you. You deserve. God's wrath. That's what. That's what opens your eyes. That's what opens your heart. To the salvation. That can be received.

Only by faith. By his sheer grace. But you see. Ezekiel. Saying there is hope. For the humble. Like that. God will make known. His dwelling.

[ 43 : 24 ] Verse 11. He'll make known. All its ways. In and out. And all of its. Customs. All of its laws. To those. Who are humble. Who are penitent. He'll show them the design.

He'll show them. How to enjoy it. In every part. He'll lead them. In all of its marvelous ways. Verse 12. The whole. Vast territory. All around. Shall be most holy.

When at last. This earth sees. The return. Ultimately. Of God's glory. To the ultimate residence. For his holiness. To be in the midst.

Of his people. When his. His sanctuary. Is in the midst. Of them forever. To make them. Holy. With him. You see.

As we've said. Already. Many times. You can read on from this. Right to the end. Of the. Story. Of the old testament. You will see. Nothing. Remotely. Resembling.

[ 44 : 21 ] What we're reading about here. Until you turn over. To the first page. Of the new testament. Gospels. And that is indeed. What we see. That's what I want to think.

A little bit about now. And it's the ultimate. Realization. Of this. In the glorious. Gospel. Of Jesus Christ. Ezekiel. Cannot. Be. Referring.

To the temple. That the returning. Exiles. Eventually built. In Jerusalem. If you read Malachi. The last prophet. Of the old testament. You'll see. That that temple. Was so corrupt. And so defiled. That God said.

Oh. That there was one among you. Who would shut the doors. That you might not. Kindle fire on my altar. In vain. I have no pleasure. In you. Says the Lord of hosts. That's why God said.

Through Malachi. That he would. Still send. A messenger. To prepare the way. For the Lord. Who will return. But when he does. Come and return. It will be with fire. Of judgment.

[ 45 : 16 ] Again. To set the evildoers. A blaze. But. For those who do. Fear him. On that day. He says. At last.

The son of righteousness. Will rise. With healing. In his wings. And the gospels. Tell us. Don't they. Of that messenger. Coming. John the Baptist. Whose father. Do you remember. Sang at his birth. Of the sunrise. At last. Bringing. Healing. Through forgiveness. Of sins. Leading his people. Into the way of peace. John's gospel. Opens with.

John the Baptist. Declaring Jesus. As the lamb of God. Who comes to take away. The sin. Not just. Of Israel. But the sins of. The world. And immediately.

Jesus. Draws attention. To himself. And his own body. And he says. This body of mine. Is the true temple. Indestructible. You will not be able.

[ 46 : 10 ] To destroy it. Because he will rise again. From the dead. And remember. Speaking to the Samaritan woman. He affirmed. Exactly. That Ezekiel's temple.

Here is no earthly temple. No. Jesus said. Didn't he. The hour is. Now come. When true worshipers. Will worship. The father. Not on this mountain. In Samaria. Where they were. Nor in Jerusalem. But in spirit.

And in truth. And he declared. To her. That he is the source. Of the living water. That Ezekiel sees. Later on. In chapter 47. Flowing out.

From this temple. From the throne. And John. Tells us. That like Ezekiel. He and others. Saw. The glory of God. Returning to this earth.

In the temple. Of human flesh. He became flesh. And dwelt among us. And we beheld. His glory. Just as the angel. Had promised to Joseph. Before his birth. Do you remember?

[ 47 : 06 ] He will be called. Emmanuel. God. With us. In the midst. On earth. And like. Ezekiel. John. And all the other apostles.

Are told by Jesus. To go and tell. The world. About what they've seen. To the very ends of the earth. To the very ends of the age. And behold. I'm with you. Says Jesus. And Christ's apostles. Affirm all of this. For the coming of Jesus. The glory of the former days. Has given way. To the far greater glory. Of these latter days. And Paul tells the Corinthians.

That if the ministry of the old. Lord. It was glorious. As it was. In the tabernacle. In the temple. How much more glorious. Will be. The thing that is now. Going to be permanent. How much more. That's the great refrain. Of the book of Hebrews. You remember. Much more glorious. Now. Than the days. When God spoke. Through prophets. And poets.

[ 48 : 03 ] And so on. When God. Touched the earth. From heaven. Through the physical temple. But now. In these last days. He says. He has spoken to us.

In his son. Who is. The radiance. Of the glory of God. The full glory of God. Has joined. Heaven to earth. Forever. In Jesus. And now. Unlike Ezekiel.

We all. Do have access. To the most holy place. To the throne of God himself. We have full. Right. Of access. Says Hebrews 10.

Through the blood of Jesus. And the way. That he has opened up. For us. Because we've been. Sprinkled clean. With pure water. Just as Ezekiel promised.

Cleansing us. From our sins. Forever. We have. An altar. He says. In the finished work. Of Christ. Our savior. So there's a great.

[ 48 : 58 ] No longer. For us. Ever since. Christ's. Kingdom. Began. With his coming. And was sealed. At his cross. To go back. To go back. To a time of earthly altars.

And priests. And sanctuaries. And earthly holy cities. And all of those things. That is to utterly denigrate. To scorn. And to turn away. From God's true temple. Now.

In the Lord Jesus Christ. Hebrews is absolutely clear on that. If we do that. It says. We trample. On the son of God. We profane.

The blood of the covenant. We outrage. The spirit of grace. That was a warning. To Christians then. In the first century. We're tempted. By what still looked.

Wonderfully glorious. An earthly temple. And sacrifices. No. There's no way back. If you go back there. He says. That's to abandon.

[ 49 : 53 ] God's salvation. It's to abandon Christ. Just as it is today. There are people who think. That the key. To the future of God's kingdom. Is a rebuilt earthly temple.

In Jerusalem. No. That's to. To trample. The son of God. Underfoot. As indeed. Is. Is anything. That uses the language.

Of Christ. But actually clings on. To this idea. Of sanctuaries. And holy buildings. And holy places. And priests. And altars. And sacrifices. At best.

That is utterly. Utterly. Confused. Really. It's quite. Anti-Christ. And the gospel. Now here. On earth. Says Hebrews. We have no.

Continuing. City. No holy city. We're gathered already. Around the holy city. Of Jerusalem. The heavenly Jerusalem. The city of the living God. We have. No earthly temple. We cannot build.

[ 50 : 48 ] Any earthly temple. Now. Without denigrating. The true temple. That is in Jesus. That can be no longer. But there is still also.

And not yet. For us. In this vision. Because we don't yet see. Do we fully. What. What Ezekiel saw here. We still await. It is final consummation. And that will not be.

Until Jesus returns. Permanently. With all his glory. And all his power. To this earth. To reign forever again. And that is what John saw.

Isn't it? At the end of the Bible. In John. In Revelation. Chapter 21. Because. As I said. He too. Is taken up. To the top. Of a very high mountain. And he sees. The new Jerusalem. Coming out of heaven.

From God. And he too. Saw it was all being measured. And if you read that chapter. You'll find. It's even bigger still. Twelve thousand stadia. Square. And as high. As it is wide. That wouldn't just cover.

[ 51 : 44 ] The whole of earthly Jerusalem. The whole of earthly Palestine. That would stretch. All the way. To the middle of Europe. Or to the middle of Africa. Or to the middle of Asia. A wonderful city.

A teeming city. Utterly vast. Utterly beautiful. And yet. A wonderful garden. At the same time. With a tree of life. In the middle. The water of life. Flowing through it. Like Eden.

But far bigger. Far better. That's the end. Of God's story. And all. The former things then.

Will be passed away. As John sees. Even death itself. Every tear. And the dwelling place. Of God. Is with man. Forever. Is told.

And. You'll remember. That in that. Vision. That John gets. In Revelation. There's no temple. Anymore. At all. Because. I think really. What Ezekiel's vision.

[ 52 : 43 ] Here hints at. As we made. Even more clear. That the. The temple. Full of priests. And the city. Full of people. Has all merged. Into one. And all the people. Are priests.

In the presence. Of that living temple. The Lord Jesus himself. All are near him. All are at his table. All have access. Always. A vast area.

With room. For multitudes. That no man can number. But also. Just as. Ezekiel saw here. A very high wall. If you read that vision. To exclude everything.

That is unholy. And impure. That has to remain outside. Yes. There are gates. Twelve gates. Named for the twelve tribes of Israel. All God's complete household. Will be there. But those gates. Are set in walls. Whose foundations. Are built. On the twelve apostles. Of the lamb. The only way. Into that everlasting city. Is through.

[ 53 : 41 ] The apostolic gospel. Of Christ. And just as. As Ezekiel. Was told here. To write down. All of these things. And make them known. Proclaim to the people.

Everything about God's temple. So Christ's apostles. Were told to do the same. Weren't they? Paul says. Our mission. Is to bring about. The obedience of faith.

For the sake of his name. Among all the nations. Those who are called. To belong to Jesus Christ. Through our. Gospel. That alone.

Is. The law. Of this temple. To the full. Consummation. Of Ezekiel's vision. And John's vision. Is not yet. But it has begun. In Jesus Christ.

And it will certainly. Be made complete. At his coming. Already. Peter tells us. Doesn't he? That God indwells. His church. We are like living stones.

[ 54 : 35 ] He says. Being built. As a spiritual house. To be a holy priesthood. Offering sacrifices to God. Through Jesus Christ. That's the church. Already. The church.

Is God's temple. And God's spirit. Dwells within us. That's what Paul says. To the Corinthian church. Indeed. Every believer. Each of our body. He says. Is a temple. Of the Holy Spirit. And so the whole territory.

Of our bodies. Are to be holy. That's a challenge to us. Isn't it? Holiness is demanded. By the presence. Of God's glory. Among his people.

That's the law. Of the temple. Everything. All around. Shall be most. Holy. And that's why. After expounding.

The wonder. Of God's people. Being built. By God. As a holy temple. As a dwelling place. For his spirit. His whole household. Jews. And Gentiles together. Do you remember. In Ephesians. Chapters 1 and 2.

[ 55 : 31 ] But Paul. Goes right on. Doesn't he. To urge Christians. To live. In a manner. Worthy. Of that great calling. Not grieving. The Holy Spirit. Of God.

Holiness is demanded. By the presence. Of God's glory. Among his people. It's a challenge. But it's also.

A wonderful encouragement. Isn't it? Because holiness. Holiness also declares. The presence. Of God's glory. To the world. When God dwells. In the midst of his people. The glory of heaven. Does come down. And touch this earth. Just as it was displayed. In the. In the human flesh. Of our Lord Jesus Christ. So. The glory of heaven. Is seen. And felt.

And known. Through the humanity. In whom. That Holy Spirit. Of the risen Lord Jesus. Dwells. And that's our calling. Isn't it? Paul says. To adorn. The doctrine of God.

[ 56 : 26 ] Our Savior. To show the world. The beauty. Of his dwelling place. Just as. Ezekiel. Showed it forth. In his vision. We also.

Says Peter. To proclaim. To the world. The excellencies. Of the one who's called us. Out of. Darkness. Into the light. Of his eternal home. To show the world. The way in. To that place.

There is a way in. There's a way in now. Through the gates. To God's dwelling. Because of the Lord Jesus. His gates. Are open wide. There's no barrier. To access.

Now to his city. Except. That of your own pride. You see. The gate is wide open. But the lintel. Is very. Very low. You can't. Stride in. To the house of God. Walking tall. And walking proud. You can't march through.

[ 57 : 25 ] You have to bow low. In penitence. See the gospel hasn't changed. Has it? From Ezekiel. To Jesus. Look again. As we close it. Chapter 43.

Verse 11. Do you see? It's to those. Who are ashamed. Of their iniquity. Who repent. Of their sins. And their rebellion. It's to these.

That God makes known. The measure of the plan. The wonderful glory. Of this future. That he's showing. To all who are his own. The time is fulfilled.

Says Jesus. The kingdom. Is at hand. Repent. And believe the gospel. That was Jesus word then. It's still his word today. Because he's here.

By his spirit. Dwelling in the midst. Of his gathered church. He's speaking the same word. Out of the most holy place. Speaking to. All of us here. Here tonight. And you can meet him.

[ 58 : 21 ] Right now. If you'll bow. To his rule. The law of the temple. The word.

Of the Lord. Made flesh. And if you haven't yet. Now is the time. Today is the day of salvation. Who knows what the world brings.

But bow to him. And he will show you. The measure of his plan. For this world. And for its future. And all. That he has purposed. Forevermore. And he'll give you a place in it.

With him. And with all his people. In his wonderful dwelling. Forevermore. Forevermore. That's the promise.

Of the gospel. Of God. Let's pray. Heavenly Father. We thank you that. What you have prepared. For the future of this world. Is beyond.

[ 59 : 20 ] Even our imagining. But. The vision given us here. Shows us. A pale shadow. Of his wonder. Of his largesse.

Of his beauty. And of his purity. So help us. Lord we pray. To live. As people. Of a holy God. Who cherish. The presence of your holiness. And who proclaim your presence. Through. Our living. In the light of your.

Great gospel. To us. Help us. We pray. To show the world. The measure of your plan. And the way in. Through the gates.

Of righteousness. For we ask it. In Jesus name. Amen. Amen. In Jesus name.

[ 60 : 23 ] In Jesus name. In Jesus name. In from by E familiarly. In Jesus name. In Jesus name. In Jesus name.

In Jesus name. In Jesus name. In Jesus name. In Jesus name. In Jesus name.