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Ezekiel's Temple



Synopsis

One of the most neglected portions of prophetic scripture is the temple vision recorded in the final chapters of the book of Ezekiel. But this vision is one that the church can no longer afford to ignore. It contains essential information for the end-time church because it is a depiction of that church and what it is to become under the final outpouring of the Holy Spirit. The temple vision of Ezekiel 40 to 48 was given to the prophet during a time of national crisis and calamity. Through apostasy Israel had forfeited the protection of God. The flower of the nation, its most promising youth, its leading men and women, were captives in Babylon. Solomon's temple was destroyed, Jerusalem lay in ruins and Judah was a desolate wilderness. Finally the land rested and enjoyed the Sabbaticals that had been denied it during the rebellion of Israel. But even while God's people were suffering the censure of God's displeasure the vision of Ezekiel pointed them forward to a complete reversal of fortunes and renewal of the divine favor. The vision reassured the repentant of the return of the presence and favor of God, pointing both them and us to the long awaited latter rain of the Holy Spirit. The prophet Ezekiel was shown a new, restored temple filled with the glory of God and Israel once again dwelling in peace and safety in their allotted inheritance at the final restoration of all things, the great and final Jubilee. The prophet Isaiah identifies this final Jubilee as the "acceptable year of the Lord"; the year of full and complete liberty from sin under the power of the Holy Spirit. But Isaiah also calls it the "day of vengeance of our God". Isaiah 61:1-2. Likewise, the temple vision, while it comforts us with the assurance of God's presence, warns of the consequences of being unprepared for God's next great move – the outpouring of the latter rain that ripens the gospel harvest. Fourteen years before this vision was given to Ezekiel he was shown in a similar vision the glory of the Lord departing the first temple shortly before it was destroyed by the Babylonians. Ezekiel 9 to 11. In this vision the glory of God reluctantly, agonizingly withdrew from the doomed city, resting briefly on the Mount of Olives. Ezekiel 11:22 and 23. Six hundred years later, Christ at his triumphal entry into Jerusalem would halt the colt that carried him at the same place on the mount and once again weep over the impenitence of the doomed city. In the temple vision the same glory that left the temple in Ezekiel 11 returns and fills the new temple. (See Ezekiel 43:1-12 and 40:1.) But before this occurs the vision describes an atonement and cleansing of the temple similar to the work of Christ in the second cleansing of the temple just before his death. Ezekiel 45:18-20, 43:1-12. This cleansing and atonement represents the essential work required before the return of the Presence. The Symbolism of Ezekiel's Temple That Ezekiel's temple typifies the empowered, end-time church is shown in many ways throughout the vision. For example, the articles that are measured and cleansed in this temple are the same articles measured

in the Revelation given the Apostle John â “ the temple, the altar and the inner court along with those worshipping there. Revelation 11:1, 2. And, the commission of John to measure the temple is the same directive given to Ezekiel. Both Ezekiel's and John's commissions symbolize the judgment or measurement of the end-time church and confirm the testimony of the Apostle Peter that judgment begins at the house of God. I Peter 4:17 and Ezekiel 9:6.

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