

# Glory of God Returns to the Temple in the Millennial Kingdom

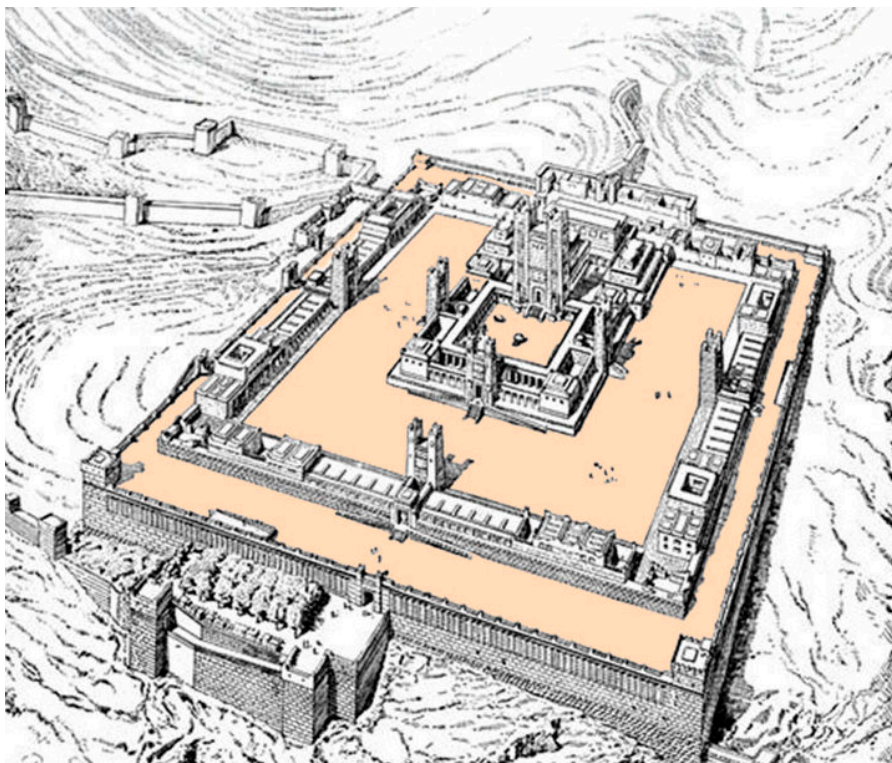
In our last study in Ezekiel 40 and 41, we discovered that a temple will be built in the millennial kingdom. These chapters give the design of the outer walls and of the gates in the wall surrounding the temple complex: the eastern, northern, and southern gates. We learned that the gates of the temple building itself were identical to the gates in the outer wall. The design of the outer and inner courts, the Holy Place, and the Holy of Holies were also described. We learned that the temple would have decorations, windows, pillars, and doorposts. It was amazing how many little details were given about the temple. But all of these details reveal God's blueprint plans for the temple and something else very important about God. We learned that Yahweh is not just interested in the style and design of His temple that will be in His millennial kingdom. He also cares about every little detail. For those who do not care about details, this may be a surprise. This reveals that our God cares about details, including every detail in our lives, every little thought, attitude, and action. Our God is a God of details. That is why He could make the universe with all of the minutiae of laws required to make it function. Thus, He was also

able to make our bodies function as they do. So much of our bodies work without us having to think about how the different parts should function. He designed our salvation and the Scriptures — everything.

Dr. Charles Feinberg wrote the following in his commentary about Ezekiel 42.

To the casual reader of Scripture this chapter can afford little of interest. In fact, the conclusion may even be that many details and features included are wholly unnecessary and without spiritual import. However, to one who has learned that God has not filled His Word with the irrelevant, inconsequential or trifling, the passage speaks clearly that our God is One of order, plan and decorum. Moreover, He has an abiding

interest in all that pertains to proper worship of Him as Creator and Redeemer. If the Lord has gone to such lengths to give such minutiae, He does indeed seek worshipers who will approach Him in Spirit and in truth. Besides, we as New Testament priests may draw certain parallels relative to our



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worship today, even though it is not encompassed with so many earthly and carnal ordinances, which were anticipatory of the day of the realization of redemption through the coming Messiah of Israel.<sup>1</sup>

**The Temple Chambers.** Our study begins with Ezekiel 42 which describes the last pieces of the design of the temple building. I will summarize the chapter which describes the priestly chambers outside of the temple building itself. I will summarize it because it is very complex and difficult to follow. Then we will spend most of our time in chapter 43, verses 1-12. Ezekiel 42:1-20 is titled “The Temple Chambers.” Here are verses 1-2,

*Then he brought me out into the outer court, the way toward the north; and he brought me to the chamber which was opposite the separate area and opposite the building toward the north. Along the length, which was a hundred cubits, was the north door; the width was fifty cubits. Ezekiel 42:1-2 (NASB)*

Immediately, the prophet Ezekiel says that “he” brought him into the outer court. We discovered in chapter 40 that the “he” is an angel. He has been giving the prophet a tour of both the temple grounds and the temple building.

At the end of Ezekiel 41, the prophet was inside the temple building. Now in verse 1 of chapter 42, Ezekiel is on the outside of the temple building, looking at a chamber (#11). We should remember that the front entrance to the temple building is on the east side and directly across from the eastern gate. So, the north gate is on the north side of the temple building. Ezekiel said the chamber will be 100 cubits or 87.5 feet long and 50 cubits or 37.5 feet in width.

The description that follows is difficult for commentators to understand. Consequently, just about everyone has a different view. So, my diagram is my best understanding of chapter 42.

Verses 3-12 describe the north building. Inside the chamber will be three galleries. Each gallery will contain a row of rooms on three different floors. On the east side

will be a door that leads to a corridor which will open onto the inner court of the temple building. The corridor will not open on the outer court because the people will not be allowed to see the priests in their priestly garments. This explains why the chamber will open onto a corridor which will lead to the inner court of the temple building. When I read this, I thought about some of the pastors and priests who put on clerical robes before they lead a congregation in worship and teach the Bible. In the Old Testament, the robes were symbolic of holiness when they performed their priestly services before the Lord.

Before we go further, I would like to quote Dr. Charles Feinberg. He said this about these priestly chambers.

It has been suggested that these accommodations for the priests speak of the mansions of John 14:1-3. The thought may be heartwarming to some, but there is no intended parallel or type of this character in the text. Even as an analogy it leaves much to be desired.<sup>2</sup>

He gives us a serious warning about imagining an application exists in the text when it does not. We should always restrict our applications to what the text teaches. What does it say or imply?

Notice that Ezekiel 42:13-14 tells us these chambers will be used for two things. First, these holy chambers are where the priests will eat the holy sacrifices. Verse 13 says they will be allowed to eat these holy things,

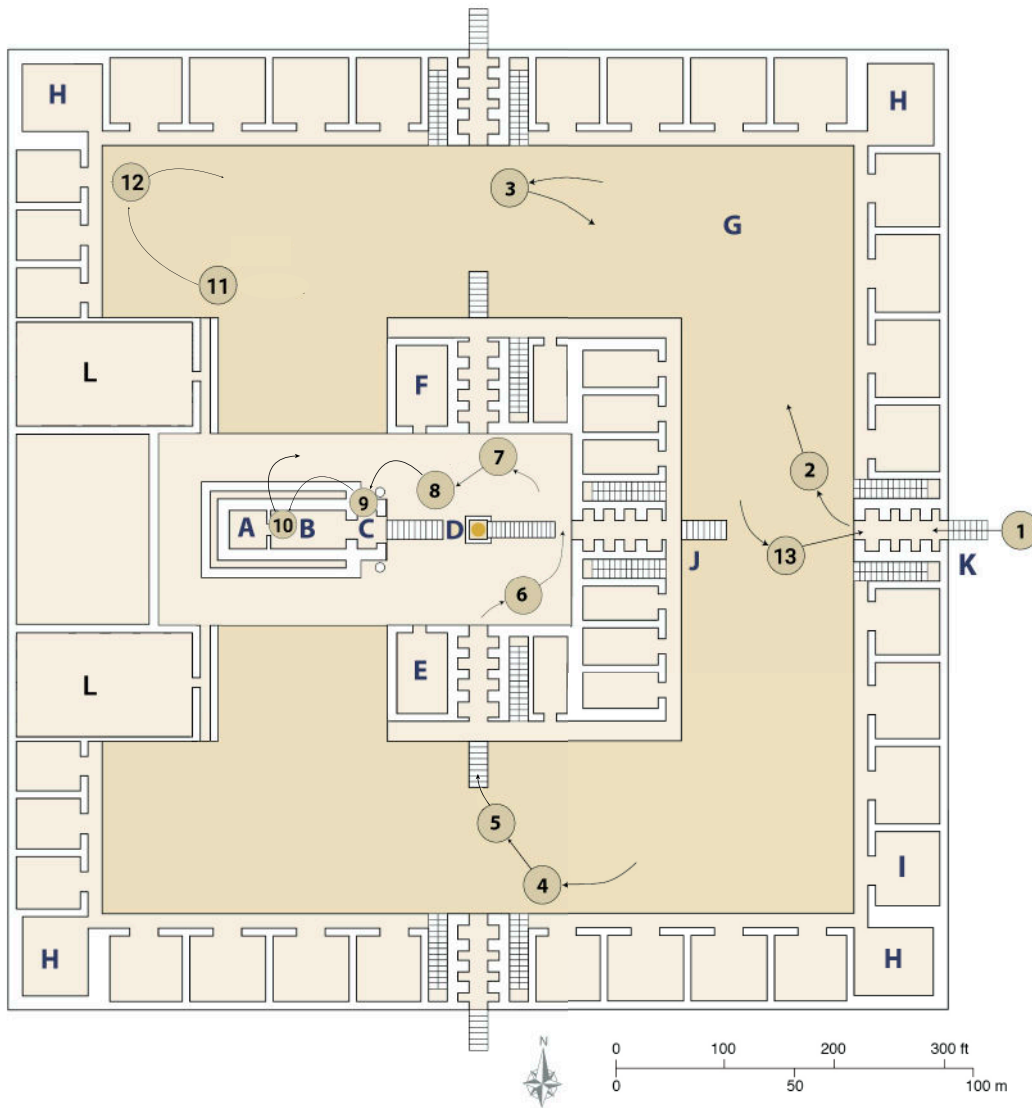
*There they shall lay the most holy things, the grain offering, the sin offering and the guilt offering; for the place is holy. Ezekiel 42:13b (NASB)*

Verses 13-14 state that there will be a second identical chamber on the south of the temple building. Second, verse 14 says these holy chambers will be where the priests must leave their holy garments. The people are not to see their priestly garments.

Finally, verses 15-18 tell us that the angel measured the outer perimeter of the temple. It will be 500 rods square. Now remember that a rod was defined for us in Ezekiel 40:5 as 6 cubits and a handbreadth or 10.5 feet. That means the

<sup>1</sup> Charles Lee Feinberg, *The Prophecy of Ezekiel*. Moody Press., 1969. p. 248.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.



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temple will be 5,250 feet or almost 1.0 mile square. That will be an enormous temple complex. That means Mount Zion will be much larger.

**Glory of the Lord Fills the Temple.** When chapter 42 ends, the description of the design of the temple complex and the temple building is complete. Later we will read about the altar on which sacrifices will be offered, the sacrifices themselves, the priest's kitchen, and the priests. But at this point the description of the building is completed.

Ezekiel 43 gives a glimpse of something that I look forward to seeing in the millennial kingdom. Verses 1-12 describe the glory of the Lord filling the millennial temple. I love this passage. Here are verses 1-2,

*Then he led me to the gate, the gate facing toward the east; and behold, the glory of the God of Israel was coming from the way of the east. And His voice was like the sound of many waters; and the earth shone with His glory. Ezekiel 43:1-2 (NASB)*

### Temple Plan

The labels below are arranged from the innermost, and most sacred, area and moving outward. It must be borne in mind that “temple” can have two quite distinct references: it can refer generally to the entire “temple” complex, including the outer gates and court; in its more “strict” reference the “temple” is the innermost structure itself, which has a single (eastern) entrance and contains the Most Holy Place.

	Reference	Explanation
<b>A</b>	41:4	The “Most Holy Place.”
<b>B</b>	41:3	The inner room of the temple.
<b>C</b>	42:2	The entrance to the temple.
<b>D</b>	43:13–17	The imposing altar; although the number of stairs is not given, the entire altar structure is about 16 feet (4.9 m) tall, so many steps would have been required. This area of the inner court was accessible only by priests—not even the prince was permitted entry.
<b>E</b>	40:46	Chamber for Zadokite priests.
<b>F</b>	40:45	Chamber for “priests who have charge of the temple.”
<b>G</b>	40:17–19	The outer court, with its 30 chambers in the outer wall (40:17).
<b>H</b>	46:21–24	The temple “kitchens,” one in each corner of the outer court.
<b>I</b>	40:17	The 30 outer chambers.
<b>J</b>	46:2	The “prince’s gate”: from its threshold he worships on each Sabbath while the priests bring the offerings into the inner court.
<b>K</b>	43:1	The main east gate, through which “the glory of the God of Israel” returns to his temple (cf. 10:19; 11:22–23).

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Once again, Ezekiel is led by the angel. This time the prophet is taken to the east gate of the temple complex, where he sees the glory of the Lord coming from the east. He hears a voice like that of many waters and the glory of the Lord radiates everywhere. If you have ever heard a waterfall, you know that the noise can be very loud as the water cascades off the cliff and hits the rocks. That seems to be what the prophet heard.

Verses 3 says,

And it was like the appearance of the vision which I saw, like the vision which I saw when He came to destroy the city. And the visions were like the vision which I saw by the river Chebar; and I fell on my face.  
Ezekiel 43:3 (NASB)

Ezekiel remembers two previous times when he saw the glory of the Lord. The times he mentions were described for us in Ezekiel 8 and 10. In both chapters he saw the glory of the Lord (Ezekiel 8:4; 10:4,18-19). Both of these visions occurred during the time that the prophet was warning the Jews to repent and turn to Yahweh. In Ezekiel 10:1-22, Ezekiel saw the glory of the Lord depart from the temple because the Babylon Army was coming to destroy Jerusalem and the temple. So, I want to read some of the verses from the chapter to set the stage for chapter 43. Here is Ezekiel 10:1-5,

Then I looked, and behold, in the expanse that was over the heads of the cherubim something like a sapphire stone, in appearance resembling a throne, appeared above them. And He spoke to the man clothed in linen and said, "Enter between the whirling wheels under the cherubim and fill your hands with coals of fire from between the cherubim and scatter them over the city." And he entered in my sight. Now the cherubim were standing on the right side of the temple when the man entered, and the cloud filled the inner court. Then the glory of the LORD went up from the cherub to the threshold of the temple, and the temple was filled with the cloud and the court was filled with the brightness

of the glory of the LORD. Moreover, the sound of the wings of the cherubim was heard as far as the outer court, like the voice of God Almighty when He speaks.  
Ezekiel 10:1-5 (NASB)

Ezekiel sees the glory of the Lord in the temple. Then verses 18-19 describe the departure of the glory of the Lord.

Then the glory of the LORD departed from the threshold of the temple and stood over the cherubim. When the cherubim departed, they lifted their wings and rose up from the earth in my sight with the wheels beside them; and they stood still at the entrance of the east gate of the LORD'S house, and the glory of the God of Israel hovered over them. Ezekiel 10:18-19 (NASB)

Now the glory of the Lord moves to the entrance of the temple and stands over four cherubim. Then the cherubim rise upward and hover over the eastern gate of the old temple, which was destroyed by the Babylonian army in 586 B.C. The glory of the Lord hovers over the gate.

Ezekiel 11:22-23 then describes what happened next.

Then the cherubim lifted up their wings with the wheels beside them, and the glory of the God of Israel hovered over them. The glory of the LORD went up from the midst of the city and stood over the mountain which is east of the city. Ezekiel 11:22-23 (NASB)

So, eventually the cherubim and the glory of the Lord rise up, leave Jerusalem and stand over the mountain on the east side of the city, and depart. So, the glory of the Lord is not in the temple when the Babylon army invades the land and destroys Jerusalem and the temple. That is, Yahweh "turned His back" on Israel and let the nation be punished after repeatedly urging them to repent of their wickedness.

Then verse 3 says that Ezekiel also remembers the vision he saw in chapter 1. In that chapter we were told that the prophet had seen a vision of four cherubim in the sky shrouded in a dark cloud coming down from the north and

lightening was flashing from the cloud. Then at the end of the chapter, Ezekiel saw Yahweh sitting above the cherubim as if He was on a cloud. Then we were told that the prophet heard the voice of the Almighty. Verse 28 said Yahweh was speaking (Ezekiel 1:24, 25, 28).

So, Ezekiel remembered the visions that he saw of the glory of the Lord. Now Ezekiel 43:4-5 continues with these words,

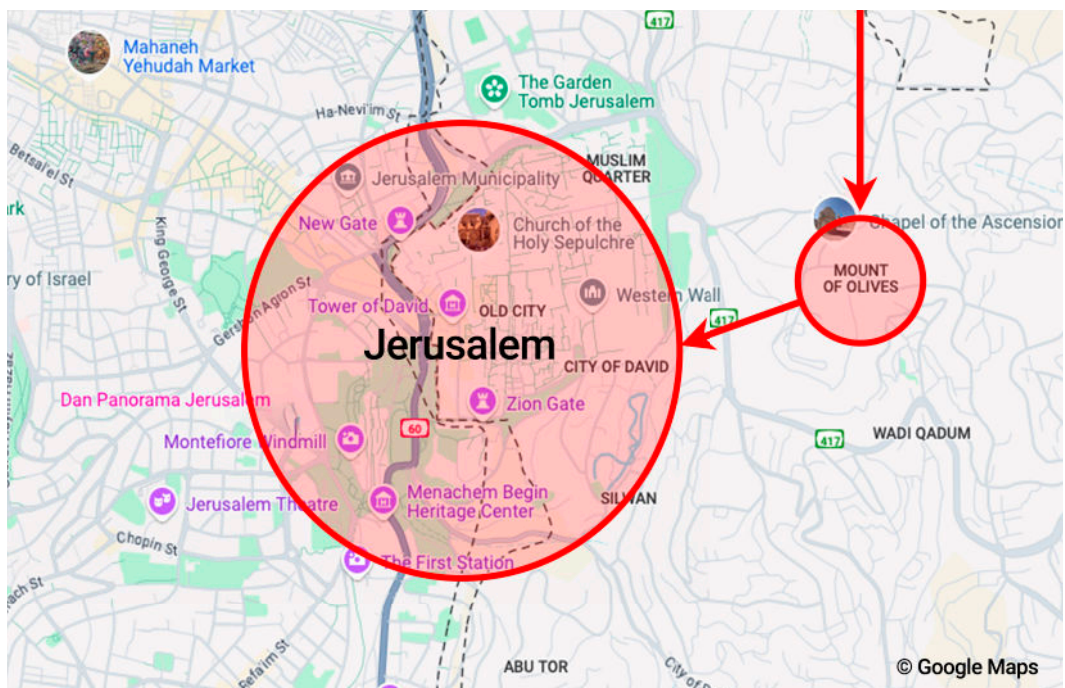
And the glory of the LORD came into the house by the way of the gate facing toward the east. And the Spirit lifted me up and brought me into the inner court; and behold, the glory of the LORD filled the house. Ezekiel 43:4-5 (NASB)

The prophet said that he saw the glory of the Lord enter the temple in the millennial kingdom. Now turn to Zechariah 14:1-4,

Behold, a day is coming for the LORD when the spoil taken from you will be divided among you. For I will gather all the nations against Jerusalem to battle, and the city will be captured, the houses plundered, the

women ravished and half of the city exiled, but the rest of the people will not be cut off from the city. Then the LORD will go forth and fight against those nations, as when He fights on a day of battle. In that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which is in front of Jerusalem on the east; and the Mount of Olives will be split in its middle from east to west by a very large valley, so that half of the mountain will move toward the north and the other half toward the south. Zechariah 14:1-4 (NASB)

These verses describe the second coming of Christ at the battle of Armageddon. The nations of the world have surrounded Jerusalem and half of the city has been defeated. Then Jesus comes in verse 3. Verse 4 says that when He comes, He will stand upon the Mount of Olives which is before Jerusalem on the east side before He moves to Jerusalem. Now I want you to notice that this is the reverse of what happened when the glory of the Lord left the temple, ascended upward and moved over to the Mount of Olives before departing. But Zechariah 14:1-4 does not describe the return of the glory of the Lord to the temple in the millennial kingdom because the Second Coming must



Second Coming of Christ to the Mount of Olives The Jerusalem

occur before the millennial kingdom is set up. Nevertheless, this passage helps us understand what Ezekiel saw in chapter 43. Zechariah 2:5 is another passage that tells us that the glory of the Lord will fill His temple in the kingdom.

**Conclusion.** Now Ezekiel 43:6-11 adds,

Then I heard one speaking to me from the house, while a man was standing beside me. 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 among the sons of Israel forever. And the house of Israel will not again defile My holy name, neither they nor their kings, by their harlotry and by the corpses of their kings when they die, by setting their threshold by My threshold and their door post beside My door post, with only the wall between Me and them. And they have defiled My holy name by their abominations which they have committed. So I have consumed them in My anger. Now let them put away their harlotry and the corpses of their kings far from Me; and I will dwell among them forever. “As for you, son of man, describe the temple to the house of Israel, that they may be ashamed of their iniquities; and let them measure the plan. “If they are ashamed of all that they have done, make known to them the design of the house, its structure, its exits, its entrances, all its designs, all its statutes, and all its laws. And write it in their sight, so that they may observe its whole design and all its statutes and do them. Ezekiel 43:6-11 (NASB)

Yahweh announces that the temple is where He will dwell with Israel in the millennial kingdom. He lists the evil things that will not be allowed to exist in the temple. We must remember that some of the Israelites will be mortal or unresurrected humans and, therefore, will still be in slavery to sin. But Yahweh will not allow them to commit certain sins.

Then the last verse of our study gives us the key to understanding chapters 40-48.

**This is the law of the house: its entire area on the top of**

**the mountain all around shall be most holy. Behold, this is the law of the house.” Ezekiel 43:12 (NASB)**

The central message of Ezekiel is that God is eliminating sin and establishing holiness. The millennial kingdom will be holy. That should cause us to repent and wage war against every sin (Romans 8:13-14). While these verses prophesy about the millennial kingdom, Revelation 21:22 tells us that in the eternal state there will be no temple building, for God will be the temple.

**I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. Revelation 21:22 (NASB)**

I can imagine the singing from the angels that will say, “Holy, Holy, Holy.”

The greatest thing God wants from us is for us to be holy. That has been the theme from chapters 2 through 35. In those chapters, God warned Israel to stop being rebellious, or He would punish them. That is, He repeatedly called them to be holy. Now we learn that in the millennial kingdom holiness will be everywhere. The immortal and mortal believers of the ages will be holy for they will have new hearts and new spirits. The mortal unbelievers will learn that disobedience will not be tolerated. Everyone will finally enjoy a world where holiness will be everywhere.