

# Regulations for the Priests in The Millennial Kingdom, part 1

We have been learning about the spiritual character of the future millennial kingdom as described in Ezekiel 40-48. We have already discovered that God's Shekinah glory and holiness will characterize the millennial kingdom. Holiness starts at the temple building, or the house, because Yahweh Himself will be there. Holiness will permeate every aspect of the kingdom. Holiness will be both a reality and the theme.

In Ezekiel 40-42, the temple complex was described. Then in Ezekiel 43:1-12, God's Shekinah glory came from the east, passing through the east gate of the outer wall of the temple complex, and finally moving into the temple proper. Then Yahweh's Shekinah glory could be seen radiating outside of the temple building.

**Construction of the Altar of Sacrifice.** In this study from Ezekiel 43:13-44:31, we will learn about the regulations of the Levitical priestly ministry that will occur in the millennial kingdom. This is a fascinating study as you will soon see. It is different than the ministry under the Mosaic Law. During our study I urge you to think about holiness because it will be everywhere. There are six sections to the study. The first one is about the

construction of the altar of sacrifice.

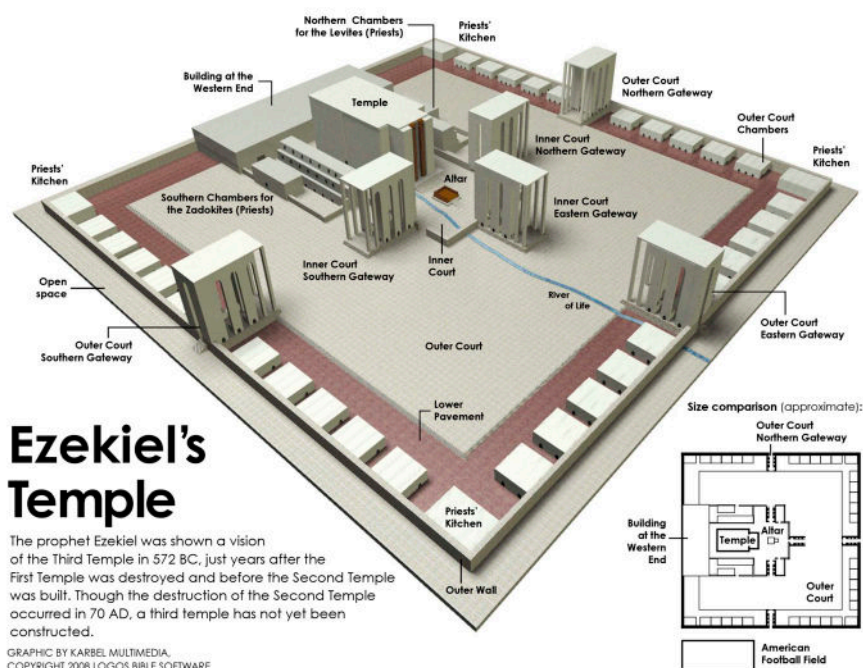
Before we read verse 13 of chapter 43, I would like to start by saying that so far we have been told of only one piece of furniture that will be in the temple in the millennial kingdom. That piece was described in Ezekiel 41:22 as a wood altar that will be before Yahweh, but we do not know its purpose. It is the only piece of furniture described in the Holy Place. No furniture is described for the Holy of Holies. We are only told that the table will be "before the Lord."

Some claim this table will be the altar of incense and will be positioned just before the Holy of Holies. Others claim it will be the table for the bread of the presence of the Lord that will be positioned on the north side of the Holy of Holies (Exodus 25:23-30). So, there is a diversity of opinion.

It is important to notice that the dimensions of the table do not match those of the table of incense or the table for

the bread of the presence in the tabernacle that was in the wilderness (Exodus 25:23-30; 30:1-3) or in Solomon's temple (1 Kings 7:48). Also, Exodus 25:23-30 says the table for the bread of the presence of the Lord was overlaid with gold and had dishes and utensils, none of which are described in Ezekiel 41:22.

Now regarding



the table of incense in the tabernacle, Exodus 30:1-3 says it had horns and was overlaid with gold. But again, Ezekiel 41:22 does not include horns or an overlay with gold. So, all that we know about the table in Ezekiel 41:22 is that there will be a table in the Holy Place. But we do not know the purpose of the table.

It is a guess to claim that it will be the altar of incense or the table for the bread of the presence of the Lord. It seems best to conclude that this is a new table with a different purpose since the altar of sacrifice in the temple in the millennial kingdom is given a name that we can identify and we are given enough information to identify its purpose. The point is that the Holy Spirit helps identify the altar of sacrifice as being similar to the one in the wilderness and in Solomon's temple, but He did not do that for the table.

Now here is Ezekiel 43:13,

**“And these are the measurements of the altar by cubits (the cubit being a cubit and a handbreadth): the base shall be a cubit and the width a cubit, and its border on its edge round about one span; and this shall be the height of the base of the altar. Ezekiel 43:13 (NASB)**

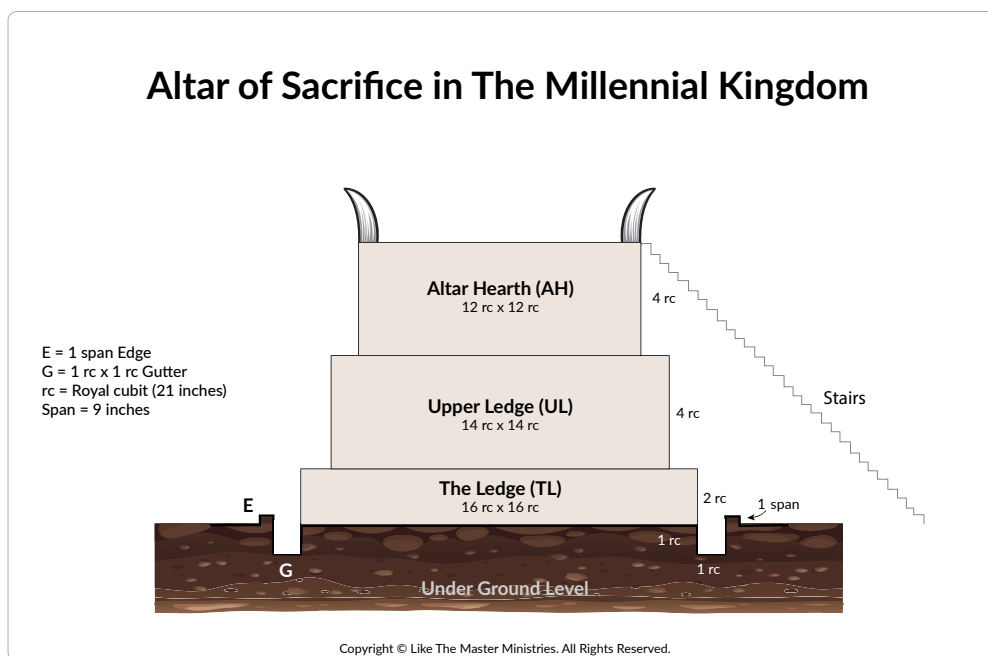
This verse and the next four verses give a description of the altar of sacrifice that will sit in the inner court, which will be in front of the temple proper. Before we are given any

dimensions about the altar, the royal cubit is defined as a normal cubit plus a handbreadth. A normal cubit was 18 inches and a handbreadth was 3 inches. Therefore, a royal cubit is 21 inches in length. Now we can understand the design of this very special altar.

The description of the altar starts from ground level and moves up to the top level of the altar. The first level of the altar is called the ledge (TL). It will be two royal cubits or almost 3.5 feet in height. It is important to know that the Hebrew word for base in the NASB is *heq*. It refers to a depression or a cavity. Even though the NASB says “shall be the height” at the end of verse 13, it should not be included since the Hebrew text does not say that. This refers to a gutter around the lower level. We are also told that it will have a curb or an edge (E) around the gutter (G). The gutter itself will be one royal cubit or almost 2 feet (21 inches) in depth and almost 2 feet (21 inches) in width. The edge will be one span or nine inches in height.

Then verses 14-17 describe the next two levels of the altar.

**“From the base on the ground to the lower ledge shall be two cubits and the width one cubit and from the smaller ledge to the larger ledge shall be four cubits and the width one cubit. The altar hearth shall be four cubits; and from the altar hearth shall extend upwards**



four horns. Now the altar hearth shall be twelve cubits long by twelve wide, square in its four sides. The ledge shall be fourteen cubits long by fourteen wide in its four sides, the border around it shall be half a cubit and its base shall be a cubit round about; and its steps shall face the east.” Ezekiel 43:14b-17 (NASB)

We are now given the next two levels. The second level will be 7.0 feet high (UL). Verse 15 says the third level is called the altar hearth (AH). It is the top level of the altar and will have a horn at each corner of the altar. It will also be four royal cubits in height or 7.0 feet in height. So, the altar will be 17.5 feet high.

Verse 16 says the altar hearth (AH) will be a square with each side measuring 12 royal cubits or 21 feet. The next verse reveals that the upper ledge (UL) will be 14 royal cubits or 24.5 feet square. The ledge (TL) will be 17 royal cubits or almost 30 feet square if the gutter is included.

If we compare the altar of sacrifice to the bronze altar that was used in the tabernacle in the wilderness (Exodus 38:1-7), we discover that it will be an extremely large sacrificial altar! Also, the altar of bronze that was in Solomon’s temple (2 Chronicles 4:1), was smaller if the shorter cubit was used. This means that the altar of sacrifice in the millennial temple will be an extremely large sacrificial altar!

**Regulations for Purifying the Altar of Sacrifice.** Next, the regulations for the purification of this altar are given in verses 18-27. The altar must be purified before it can be used. This section is titled “Regulations for Purifying the Altar of Sacrifice.” Verses 18-21 explain how the altar must be purified on the first day the construction of the altar is completed. We are told that the priests who are descendants of Zadok will be the ones who kill a young bull for a sin offering (v. 18-19). Then the blood of the young bull will be sprinkled on the four horns of the altar and the four corners of the ledge (v. 20). Verse 21 says the body of the bull will be burned somewhere outside of the sanctuary. So, its blood will be sprinkled on the altar and its body burned outside the sanctuary.

Then verses 22-27 describe six more days of sacrifice for a total of seven days in which atonement will continue to be

made for the altar. But on these six additional days, a male goat without blemish, another young bull without blemish, and a ram without blemish shall be offered to the Lord as a burnt offering. The priest will sprinkle salt on them as a sign of faithfulness or loyalty to Yahweh. These symbolically make atonement, purify, and consecrate the altar (v. 25).

Then on the eighth day the priests from the sons of Zadok will sacrifice both the burnt and peace offerings for the sins of individual people. Now you may wonder if there is anything important about the sons of Zadok being allowed to offer these sacrifices? The answer is yes. The explanation will be given in the next chapter starting in verse 15.

These sacrifices reveal once again that holiness is extremely important to Yahweh. Holiness will be emphasized everywhere in the millennial kingdom. For example in Zechariah 14:20-21, we are told that in the millennial kingdom the bells of the horses will be inscribed with the words “Holy to the Lord,” and every cooking pot in Jerusalem and in Judah will be holy to the Lord. Here are Zechariah 14:20-21a,

*In that day there will be inscribed on the bells of the horses, “HOLY TO THE LORD.” And the cooking pots in the LORD’S house will be like the bowls before the altar. Every cooking pot in Jerusalem and in Judah will be holy to the LORD of hosts; and all who sacrifice will come and take of them and boil in them. Zechariah 14:20-21a (NASB)*

The millennial kingdom and the temple are going to be wonderful to see and experience. Holiness will be a reality everywhere.

### **Regulations About the Outer East Gate.**

The third section of the regulations related to worship in the millennial kingdom is given in Ezekiel 44:1-3. Here are all three verses,

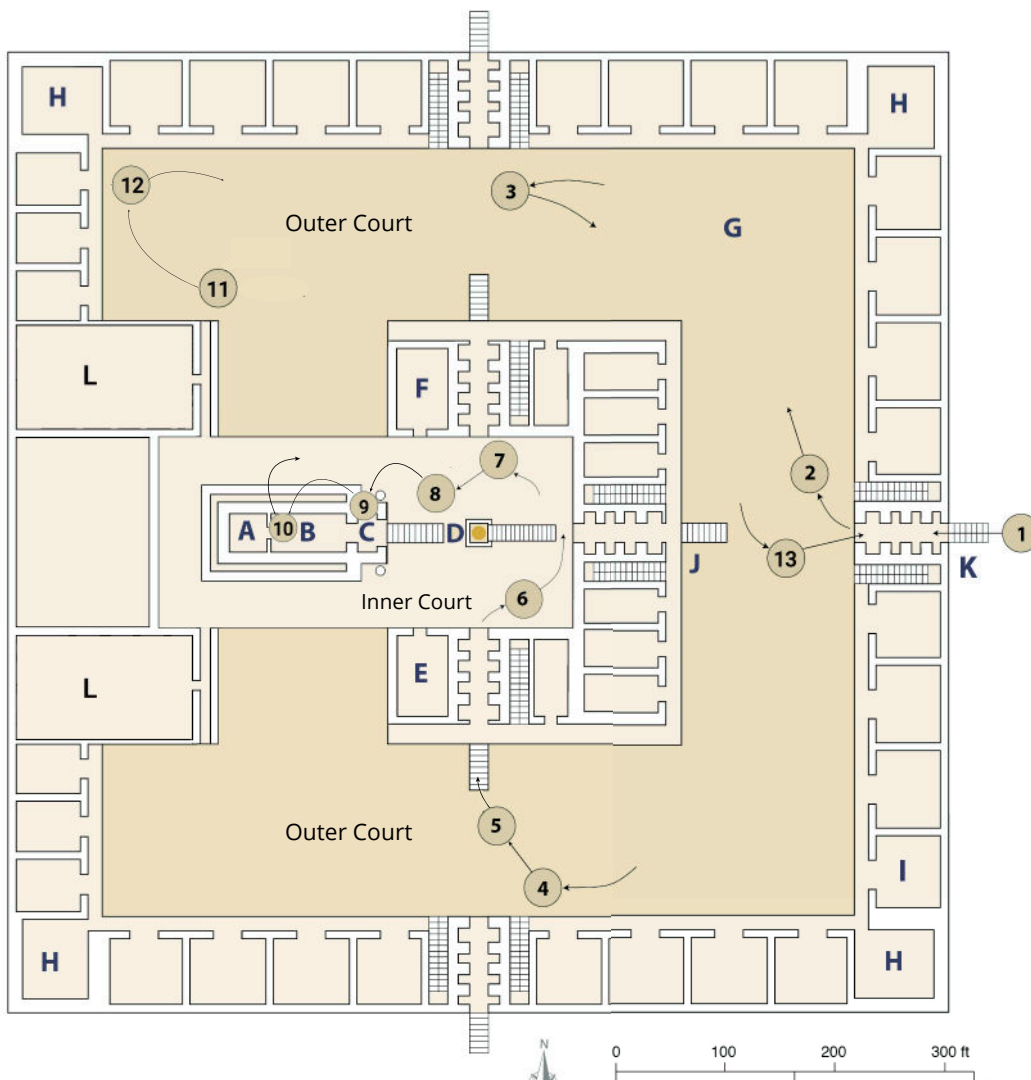
*Then He brought me back by the way of the outer gate of the sanctuary, which faces the east; and it was shut. The LORD said to me, “This gate shall be shut; it shall not be opened, and no one shall enter by it, for the*

LORD God of Israel has entered by it; therefore it shall be shut. As for the prince, he shall sit in it as prince to eat bread before the LORD; he shall enter by way of the porch of the gate and shall go out by the same way.”  
 Ezekiel 44:1-3 (NASB)

The prophet said that his guide took him back to the outer East Gate (see #13 in the diagram of the temple in the millennial kingdom). He saw that the gate was now shut. He was told that after Yahweh passed through the east gate, it will be shut. No one can enter through it. Therefore, it must always be kept shut because Yahweh had passed through it. This is the first regulation about the east gate.

We must not be confused with the eastern gate that is sealed today in modern Jerusalem. That gate is called the “Golden Gate” or the “Gate of Mercy.” It is located in the old city of Jerusalem. It must not be confused for two reasons. First, the east gate of the temple in the millennial kingdom will be a new gate. The second reason is that the two gates have different dimensions and purposes. So, the point is they are two very different gates.

Now verse 3 adds that the prince may enter “by way of the porch of the East Gate and sit while he eats bread before the Lord. When he finishes, he must leave the same way. The porch of each gate on the temple complex is 87.5 feet away from the gate. Each porch opens directly onto the



Ezekiel's Temple In The Millennial Kingdom (Used by Permission of Crosswalk, edited.)

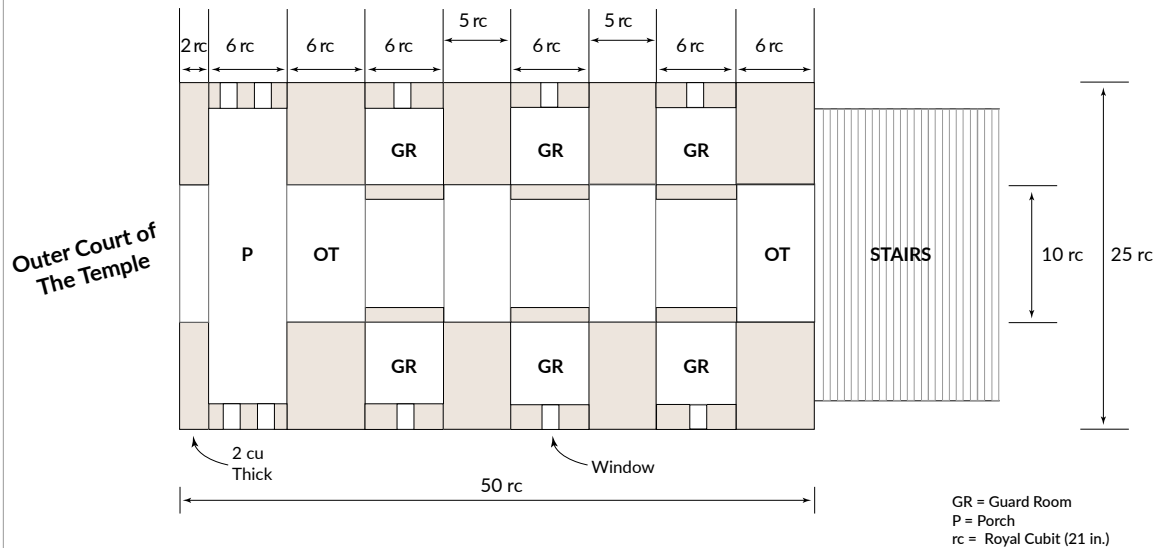
## Temple Plan

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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## Diagram of East Gate in The Millennial Kingdom



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outer court that will be adjacent to the temple proper. That means the prince will have to enter the porch from the outer court and then sit and eat. This is the second regulation about the east gate.

Now we have an important question. Who is this prince? Since chapter 46 will give us a great amount of information about him, I will wait until that chapter to give a full explanation. But for now, I will just say that I and many others believe he will be an administrator over the millennial kingdom, just as Daniel was an administrator under King Nebuchadnezzar (Daniel 48-49). We will learn more about him in chapter 46.

Again, we see the holiness of Yahweh affecting the millennial kingdom. After our holy God passes through the outer east gate, no man will be allowed to enter or leave through it.

**Regulations About Who Can Enter the Temple.** The fourth section of the regulations is related to who can worship in the millennial kingdom and is given in Ezekiel 44:4-9. The section is titled, “Regulations About Who Can Enter the Temple.” I will not read all of the verses.

Instead, I will summarize this section. Verse 4 says that the prophet was brought through the north gate since he cannot pass through the east gate to the sanctuary. Then Ezekiel saw the Shekinah glory of Yahweh filling the temple proper or the house of the Lord.

This regulation warns Israel to not let any foreigner worship at the temple. Yahweh lists some of their sins of the past and says,

“Enough of all your abominations, O house of Israel, when you brought in foreigners, uncircumcised in heart and uncircumcised in flesh, to be in My sanctuary to profane it, even My house. Ezekiel 44:6b-7a (NASB)

Then in verse 8 Yahweh told them,

And you have not kept charge of My holy things yourselves, but you have set foreigners to keep charge of My sanctuary.” Ezekiel 44:8 (NASB)

Then Yahweh called the sons of Israel who did not believe in Him foreigners. He said they had uncircumcised hearts and uncircumcised flesh. Consequently, the unbelieving Israelites would not be allowed to worship in His sanctuary. Therefore, this regulation prevents every unbeliever in the millennial kingdom entering the temple. These unbelievers will be the children of those believers who survived the tribulation. That is, the mortal believers or resurrected believers who survived the tribulation will enter the millennial kingdom and produce children (Isaiah 65:17-25). Then their children will either believe in Christ or reject Him. Those who reject Christ will be considered the foreigners. They are the ones with the uncircumcised hearts and uncircumcised flesh. Unbelievers will not be allowed to contaminate the temple. Again, holiness will be a reality in the millennial kingdom.

**Conclusion.** The reality that will shock every mortal person in the millennial kingdom will be the Shekinah glory and the holiness of our God. Holiness will be seen and experienced everywhere. It is a reminder that God desires holiness from us. For those who are unbelievers, it will be a warning to believe in Christ in order to become holy. For mortal believers, it will be a call to please the Father and Jesus Christ our Savior and Lord and be as holy as He is holy. 1 Peter 1:15-16 calls us to be holy. It says,

*But like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior; because it is written, "YOU SHALL BE HOLY, FOR I AM HOLY." 1 Peter 1:15-16 (NASB)*

I urge you to give God glory and hallow His name by pursuing holiness.