

Newsletter November 2019

At the beginning of the Millennial Age, the Lord Jesus Christ will build an entirely new Temple and surrounding complex on earth. The Millennial Temple and the surrounding compound is described in exhaustive detail by the prophet Ezekiel within Chapters 40-42 of his written prophecy. In this article, we shall briefly discuss this Temple's physical construction as well as its intended purpose and utilization.

It must be understood that some three and one-half years prior to the Millennial Age, the Church will have been transported off the earth within the Rapture – her mission on earth accomplished. The Temple is unique to Israel: The Church never had a Temple, nor had God ever required the construction of any other building of worship; for God dwelt within Christian believers both singularly and collectively through the Holy Spirit, fully comprising his Church on earth wherever they assembled together. The Church was prohibited from offering up blood sacrifices for sin, lest they dishonor Christ: her salvation was fully anchored in a God-given faith made possible through his shed blood offered up on the cross once for all who believe and place their trust in Him (cf. He.10:10). Moreover, the Church did not celebrate the Jewish Passover, which required the blood of a lamb. In its place, Jesus had instituted the Lord's table as a memorial to his death (cf. Lu.22:19,20) to be regularly observed until He returns to claim his Church. The blood shed by the Lamb of God, Jesus Christ, is symbolically represented in this ritual by the "blood" of the grape – not by animal blood. The Church's inheritance is not a parcel of land upon this earth, but a privileged place at Christ's side, as his beloved wife in his Heavenly domain.

At the dawn of the Millennial age, Christ will establish the long anticipated Kingdom of Heaven on earth, which God had specifically promised to Israel and which Christ had offered them (Mt.3:2;4:17;5:3-20). With the removal of the Church, the age of abundant grace (i.e. the Church age) will come to an abrupt end, and in its place the divine law of God will prevail in full force until all has been completely fulfilled (cf. Mt.5:18). To secure that fulfillment, God will again turn to Israel whom He foreknew, and to whom his Law had been previously given. Accordingly, the Mosaic system will be fully restored to Israel during the Millennium – including the reestablishment of blood sacrifice of animals through reinstatement of the Levitical liturgy, the burnt offering, sin offering, and trespass offering. The reinstatement of blood sacrifices in the Millennium may sound very strange, even shocking, to today's Christian believer. However, in this present age, the redemption that the Church has received with absolute certainty through the indwelling Holy Spirit, the Jew as yet can only see from afar off through their shadowy rituals as vague signs until their true meaning is revealed to them.

While the purpose of the Mosaic system of old was prophetic in nature pointing in type to the coming Messiah, the purpose for the restoration of the Mosaic system in the Millennium will be memorial in nature. Jews living in that future age will look back in time to the blood sacrifice of their Messiah, Jesus Christ, whose death they had ignorantly demanded. With Jesus on the throne, the rigorous ritual activity taking place within the Millennial Temple by those future Jews will have their eyes opened to the redemptive value of the blood sacrifice of their Messiah. Furthermore, it will provide training for those of their number who will later serve as priests before God's throne within the New Jerusalem of the Eternal Ages to come. In addition to the training priests to serve in the Heavenly Temple, the Millennial Temple will also serve as a theological institute to teach both Israel and Gentile nations alike how to properly walk in God's ways, and conform to his divine Laws that will be stringently enforced during that age. This Temple had been foreseen earlier by the prophet Isaiah as the LORD's house. in which He will teach all peoples his ways, so that they will learn to walk in his paths and keep his Law:

“And it shall come to pass in the last days, *that the mountain of the LORD'S house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem*”
(Is.2:2,3).

The dimensions of the Millennial Temple complex will differ in many ways from any of the other Temple compounds previously built upon the earth. Moreover, numerous semblances and parallels will be found between this future Millennial complex on earth and the New Jerusalem of the Eternal Ages. For that reason, it can be assumed that the Millennial complex is intended to be an earthly representation of that eternal Heavenly city, whose builder and maker is God. Therefore, while this text in the prophecy of Ezekiel unquestionably refers to

the Millennial Temple, it is also a foreshadow or type of the New Jerusalem, which God will establish upon a great mountain on a New Earth within the Eternal Ages.

Having said all this by way of introduction, let us now begin a cursory examination of the text of the prophecy of Ezekiel in which he received a vision of the physical construction of this future Millennial Temple complex. Ezekiel's description of the Millennial Temple and its environs is so detailed and extensive that we shall only be able to highlight its main attributes here:

“In the five and twentieth year of our captivity, in the beginning of the year, in the tenth *day* of the month, in the fourteenth year after that the city was smitten, in the selfsame day the hand of the LORD was upon me, and brought me thither. In the visions of God brought he me into the land of Israel, and set me upon a very high mountain, by which *was* as the frame of a city on the south” (Ez.40:1,2).

Ezekiel received the vision of a new Temple complex some twenty-five years after Solomon's Temple in Jerusalem had been destroyed by Babylon and a host of God's people in Israel had been taken away captive into Babylon. Here he says that he was carried forth in the “visions of God.” from that, we must assume he was spiritually, not physically, transported. Nonetheless, Ezekiel was returned to the land of Israel in the vision and was set upon a high mountain by which he saw an outline of a great city on the south. This “very high mountain” is highly suggestive of the “great high mountain” upon which the Apostle John was transported in a similar vision to view the New Jerusalem descending out of Heaven (cf. Re. 21:10). It will become evident as Ezekiel's vision continues, that this “frame of a city” that he saw to the south constituted a Temple complex of great size.

“And he brought me thither, and, behold, *there was* a man, whose appearance *was* like the appearance of brass, with a line of flax in his hand, and a measuring reed; and he stood in the gate.” (Ez.40:3).

This “man of brass” is obviously a heavenly escort – much like the angel that would centuries later be sent to escort John the Apostle to measure and establish a perspective of the New Jerusalem, as the “lamb's wife” (cf. Re. 21:9). The man of brass held a reed in his hand to measure short distances and also a line of flax that could be utilized along with the reed to measure much longer distances. As this man of brass plumbed various objects and measured the distances between them, Ezekiel recorded all of these lengths in his written prophecy.

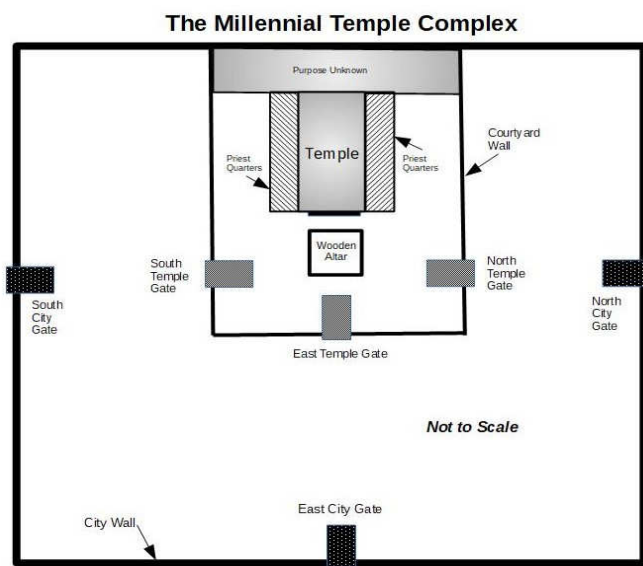
Physical dimensions throughout this ancient text are given in cubits and “reeds.” A cubit is defined as the length of a man's arm from the elbow to the tip of the middle finger. This length is commonly considered to be

around 18 inches today, but due to the varying stature of men living within various locations upon the earth throughout various periods of history, it could have been as long as 21 inches. It is impossible to be dogmatic concerning the length of a cubit found in this text. However, we must standardize this measurement in order to gain a consistent idea of the shape and size of the Temple and its surrounding complex. We have chosen a cubit varying in length from 20 to 21 inches, because it can be assumed more accurate for the taller stature and arms of men in Ezekiel's day. The slight variation of an inch will be evidenced in various calculations of English lengths found within this discussion.

“And behold a wall on the outside of the house round about, and in the man's hand a measuring reed of six cubits long by the cubit and an hand breadth: so he measured the breadth of the building, one reed; and the

height, one reed (Ez. 40:5).

Ezekiel gives us the length of this reed as being equal to 6 cubits. Therefore, by calculation the “reed” may have been anywhere from 10 to 10.5 feet long. The Temple proper is commonly referred to as the “house”



throughout this text. The word “building” found here does not refer to the house, but to the construction of the wall surrounding it, which measured approximately 10ft thick by 10 ft high.

The Temple complex will have both an outer perimeter wall as well as an inner wall that encloses the house of the Temple proper as is shown in the simple illustration above, which is not to scale. The outer perimeter wall surrounding the entire temple complex also measured 10 feet high and 10 feet wide by the man of brass. Its length as is given in Ez. 42:16-10, totals about four miles: approximately one mile (i.e. 5250 feet) on each of four equal sides of the city enclosure. It should be noted that a 20 inch cubit would result in a length of 5000 feet, while the 5250 feet given here is based upon a 21 inch cubit. Even so, we find that the entire Temple complex will encompass an area of roughly one square mile. This large square enclosure will be located upon the flat surface of a high mountain (cf. Ez. 40:2). We must note that a Temple complex of this size could not possibly fit upon the current 34-acre “Temple Mount” located just north of the old city of Jerusalem, inasmuch as one square mile encompasses 640 acres. This large flat mountain top does not presently exist anywhere within the land of Israel. However, the topography of the land of Israel will have been greatly altered at the beginning of the Millennium (cf. Zec.14:4,5).

The outer wall of the complex will have three gates; one of which is located on each of the north, east, and south walls. There is no western gate into the complex; inasmuch as the area of the western wall where such a gate could be expected is occupied by a rectangular building – whose purpose is not stated in Ezekiel’s prophecy. The three “gates” into the city are actually massive gateways all of which are identical in construction; each making up a very complex structure in themselves. The dimensions of each gateway measures about 38 ft wide and they extend inward some 75 feet through the perimeter wall into the outer area of the complex.

Located within each gateway are six chambers of equal size. These chambers are placed three on either side of a central walkway that runs throughout the length of the gateway:

“And every little chamber was one reed long, and one reed broad; and between the little chambers were five cubits; and the threshold of the gate by the porch of the gate within was one reed” (Ez.40:7). “And the little chambers of the gate eastward were three on this side, and three on that side; they three were of one measure: and the posts had one measure on this side and on that side” (Ez. 40:10):

Each of these little chambers are square measuring about 10 feet by 10 feet, and the space separating them is about 5 feet. Three were on one side and three on the opposite side within the gateway. A threshold placed across the entrance of each of these gateways is about 10 feet wide, and a similar threshold is also placed at the innermost end of each gateway. Ezekiel also speaks of stone tables placed upon the broad porch at the gateways for the purpose of slaying sacrificial animals:

“And in the porch of the gate were two tables on this side, and two tables on that side, to slay thereon the burnt offering and the sin offering and the trespass offering. And at the side without, as one goeth up to the entry of the north gate, were two tables; and on the other side, which was at the porch of the gate, were two tables. Four tables were on this side, and four tables on that side, by the side of the gate; eight tables, whereupon they slew their sacrifices. And the four tables were of hewn stone for the burnt offering, of a cubit and an half long, and a cubit and an half broad, and one cubit high: whereupon also they laid the instruments wherewith they slew the burnt offering and the sacrifice. And within were hooks, an hand broad, fastened round about: and upon the tables was the flesh of the offering” (Ez. 40:39-42).

Another wall surrounding the inner court will have three gateways that are similar, but not identical, in construction and size to the gateways of the outer wall. These three gateways are located in-line with the outer-wall gateways, as is shown in the illustration above; but due to the fact that the Temple is shown greatly enlarged, the north and south outer gates are not centered within their walls, but located much closer to the western wall.

“So he measured the court, an hundred cubits long, and an hundred cubits broad, foursquare; and the altar that was before the house” (Ez 40:47).

The inner court itself measured by the man of brass was approximately 175 feet by 175 feet square before the house of the Temple. Central to this inner court stands a wooden altar by which one must pass to enter into the house of the Temple proper:

“The altar of wood was three cubits high, and the length thereof two cubits; and the corners thereof, and the length thereof, and the walls thereof, were of wood: and he said unto me, This is the table that is before the LORD” (Ez.41:22).

This altar measured about 5 foot high and around 40 to 45 inches square. This is apparently the altar of incense, for its dimensions are much smaller than the altar of sacrifice given in Ez. 43:13-18. This small wooden altar is referred to as the “table set before the LORD,” from which He receives prayer and praise.

Ten stairs, which measure about twenty feet wide, lead upward from the inner court toward the entrance to the Temple proper, which dominates the entire western edge of the inner court. The stairs immediately lead onto a wide porch that measures some 30 feet wide and extends about 18 feet inward toward the Temple entrance.

The massive outer walls of the Temple were measured as being around nine feet thick. This building is divided into an outer chamber measuring 30 by 60 feet and an inner chamber measuring 30 foot square, which is referred to by Ezekiel’s escort as the “Most Holy Place.” The entrance from the porch into the outer chamber is defined by two massive doorposts that measure about seven and one-half feet high, and the width of the entrance measures about 15 feet. The entrances to both the outer and inner sanctuaries are fitted with double doors each hinged with two leaves (cf. Ez. 41:23,24). These doors replace the outer curtain separating the outer Temple from the inner court, as well as the heavy veil that separated the outer Temple from the Holy of Holies as were found in previous Temples.

On either side of the Temple are living quarters for the priests who serve in the Temple: the quarters on the south are for those who maintain the Temple, and those on the north are for the sons of Zadok who are in charge of the altar, and for the Levites who directly minister to God in the Temple (cf. Ez.40:45,46).

“Afterward he brought me to the gate, even the gate that looketh toward the east: And, behold, the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the east: and his voice was like a noise of many waters: and the earth shined with his glory. And it was according to the appearance of the vision which I saw, even according to the vision that I saw when I came to destroy the city: and the visions were like the vision that I saw by the river Chebar; and I fell upon my face” (Ez.43:1-3).

Once the Temple is completed the Shekinah glory of God will return. This is not a phenomena but a person as is indicated by the pronouns “he” and “his.” This is Christ, the true Messiah, who will come through the eastern gate of the city within a cloud of glory. His voice will be overpowering as is a great waterfall, and His glory will cover the earth. This reminds Ezekiel of the glory of God that he had recorded in Ez. 1:4-28. Again, he fell prone upon his face, this time at the appearance of the Shekinah glory of God surrounding his Son, Jesus Christ. The worship that takes place in the Millennial Temple will not be discussed in this brief Article, but is fully described by Ezekiel in Chapters 43-46.

“And the glory of the LORD came into the house by the way of the gate whose prospect is toward the east. So the spirit took me up, and brought me into the inner court; and, behold, the glory of the LORD filled the house” (Ez.43:4,5).

Christ will enter the eastern gate of the inner court. As He enters the inner court of the Temple, He closes the eastern gate behind Him (cf. Ez.44:1-3), such that none other can ever enter, and His glory filled the entire house (i.e. the “Temple”).

“And I heard him speaking unto me out of the house; and the man stood by me. And he said unto me, Son of man, the place of my throne, and the place of the soles of my feet, where I will dwell in the midst of the children of Israel for ever, and my holy name, shall the house of Israel no more defile, neither they, nor their kings, by their whoredom, nor by the carcasses of their kings in their high places” (Ez.43:6,7).

Christ vows that He will forever dwell upon his Throne and shall forever walk in the midst of the children of Israel. Never again will the Jew defile his name; neither will there ever again be any earthly king in Israel who will defile his holy name through sinful acts of unfaithfulness. The names of any earthly kings will not be remembered, nor will the high places where their bodies are buried be honored. Christ shall forever reign supreme as the King of Israel. © Arthur J. Smith, November 2019.