

Small Group Study Guide: Ezekiel's Vision of the Future Temple

Ezekiel 40-43



Opening Prayer

Begin your time together with prayer, asking God to open your hearts and minds to understand His Word and His plans for the future.

Introduction

This week we explored Ezekiel's detailed vision of a future temple that has never been built. This magnificent structure represents God's promise to dwell with His people forever and points to the millennial reign of Christ.

Key Takeaways

1. **God's Specific Instructions:** This is the first time God gave detailed instructions for a permanent temple structure, indicating its significance in His future plans.
 2. **The Glory Returns:** God's glory enters from the east, just as Jesus entered Jerusalem, and will enter again when He establishes His kingdom.
 3. **A Place of Dwelling:** This temple is described as "the place of my throne...where I will dwell in the midst of the children of Israel forever" (Ezekiel 43:7).
 4. **Symmetry and Perfection:** The temple's design is highly symmetrical with three entrances (east, north, south), representing perfect access to God's presence.
 5. **Sacrifices Continue:** Sacrifices in this temple appear to be memorial in nature, similar to communion today, not for atonement since Christ's sacrifice was once and for all.
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Discussion Questions

Understanding the Text

1. What struck you most about the level of detail God gave Ezekiel regarding this temple? What might this tell us about God's character and His plans?
2. How does this temple differ from the Tabernacle, Solomon's Temple, and Zerubbabel's Temple? Why do you think God designed it differently?
3. The sermon mentioned that this temple has three entrances to both the outer and inner courts (excluding the west). What might this symbolize about access to God in the millennial kingdom?

Theological Reflection

4. How do you reconcile the continuation of sacrifices in this future temple with the finished work of Christ on the cross? What purpose might these sacrifices serve?
5. The pastor suggested these sacrifices might function similarly to communion—as a memorial rather than for atonement. How does this understanding help you process this passage?
6. Ezekiel 43:7 says this is where God will "dwell in the midst of the children of Israel forever." How does this fulfill God's original intention from the Garden of Eden to dwell with His people?

Personal Application

7. The vision includes palm trees throughout the temple, possibly referencing Jesus' triumphal entry. How does connecting Old Testament prophecy with New Testament fulfillment strengthen your faith?
8. God told Ezekiel to describe the temple to Israel "that they may be ashamed of their iniquities" (43:10). How does understanding God's future plans impact how you view your current walk with Him?
9. The eighth day is emphasized as the day of acceptance—the same day Jesus rose from the dead. How does seeing these connections throughout Scripture encourage you in your daily life?

Eschatological Discussion

10. The sermon raised questions about whether this is the millennial temple or if a third temple will be built and later defiled before this one is constructed. What are your thoughts on this timeline?
11. How does studying prophecy about the future affect your present-day faith and obedience?
12. This passage emphasizes that God will dwell with His people forever in a specific location (Israel). How does this concrete, physical promise differ from more spiritualized interpretations you may have heard?

Practical Applications

This Week's Challenge

Choose one or more of these applications to focus on this week:

1. **Study the Presence of God:** Trace the theme of God's presence throughout Scripture—from Eden, to the Tabernacle, to Solomon's Temple, through Jesus ("the Word became flesh and dwelt among us"), to the Church, and finally to this future temple. Journal about what this progression means for your relationship with God.
2. **Practice Memorial Worship:** As you take communion this week (or reflect on it), consider how it serves as a memorial of Christ's finished work. Thank God specifically for the complete atonement provided through Jesus.

3. **Examine Your Access to God:** The temple has multiple entrances, symbolizing access to God's presence. Reflect on how Christ has given you direct access to the Father. Are you taking full advantage of this privilege in prayer and worship?
 4. **Share the Hope:** The detailed nature of this prophecy shows God keeps His promises. Share with someone this week about a promise of God that gives you hope for the future.
 5. **Repent and Worship:** God said to describe the temple so Israel would "be ashamed of their iniquities." Take time to confess any areas where you've been living in opposition to God's holiness, and worship Him for His faithfulness despite our failures.
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Going Deeper

For those who want to study further:

- Read Revelation 21-22 and compare the New Jerusalem with Ezekiel's temple. What similarities and differences do you notice?
 - Study the Tabernacle instructions in Exodus 25-40 and compare them with Ezekiel's temple
 - Research the measurements given (a rod is approximately 10.5 feet; a royal cubit is about 21 inches) and try to visualize or sketch the temple layout
 - Read Zechariah 14 about Christ's return and reign from Jerusalem
 - Study the concept of memorial sacrifices versus atoning sacrifices in Leviticus
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Closing Reflection

Key Verse to Memorize: "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 children of Israel forever." - Ezekiel 43:7

Final Thought: God's detailed blueprint for a temple that has yet to be built reminds us that He keeps His promises with precision. Just as He will fulfill this prophecy, He will fulfill every promise He has made to us. Our God is not vague or uncertain—He is specific, faithful, and His plans will come to pass exactly as He has declared.

Closing Prayer

Close your time by praying:

- In thanksgiving for God's faithfulness to His promises
- For Israel and God's continued work in bringing His people to faith in Jesus
- For a greater longing for Christ's return and His kingdom
- That your group would live with eternal perspective in light of God's future plans

Notes Section

Use this space to record insights, questions, or personal reflections from your discussion:

For Next Week: Continue in Ezekiel 44-48 as we explore more details about worship, the priesthood, and the land distribution in the millennial kingdom.

5-Day Devotional: The Temple of God's Presence



Day 1: God's Detailed Plans for His People

Reading: Ezekiel 40:1-5; Exodus 25:8-9

Devotional:

God's intricate instructions to Ezekiel reveal something profound: our God is a God of detail who cares deeply about dwelling with His people. Just as He gave Moses precise instructions for the tabernacle and showed Ezekiel the future temple, God has specific plans for your life. These aren't vague suggestions but detailed blueprints born from His love. The measuring rod in the angel's hand reminds us that God's standards are exact, yet His purpose is always relationship—"that I may dwell among them." Today, trust that God's plans for you are intentional, measured, and designed to bring you closer to Him. What areas of your life need to align with His precise, loving design?

Day 2: The Glory Returns

Reading: Ezekiel 43:1-7; Exodus 40:34-38

Devotional:

Ezekiel witnessed God's glory departing from the temple due to Israel's sin (Ezekiel 10), but in chapter 43, he sees it return from the east. This is the promise of restoration—God will not abandon His people forever. The voice "like the sound of many waters" declares, "This is the place of my throne...where I will dwell in the midst of the children of Israel forever." No matter how far you've wandered, God's glory desires to return to your life. Jesus entered Jerusalem from the east and will return the same way. His presence transforms everything. Are there areas of your life where you need God's glory to return? Invite Him back today.

Day 3: Symmetry and Order in God's Kingdom

Reading: Ezekiel 40:28-37; 1 Corinthians 14:33, 40

Devotional:

The temple's perfect symmetry—identical measurements on north, south, and east—reveals God's character: He is a God of order, not chaos. Three entrances to the outer court, three to the inner court, eight steps ascending upward. Eight, the number of new beginnings, pointing to resurrection. The palm trees adorning every gate remind us of Jesus' triumphal entry when people waved palms, acknowledging their King. God's kingdom operates with divine order and beauty. Your life, though it may feel chaotic, can reflect His order when surrendered to Him. What disorder in your life needs God's organizing touch? Trust His design brings both beauty and purpose.

Day 4: Sacrifice and Memorial

Reading: Ezekiel 43:13-27; Hebrews 10:1-4, 11-14

Devotional:

The altar's detailed measurements and the continuation of sacrifices in Ezekiel's temple challenge us. Christ's sacrifice was once-for-all, yet these future offerings point to memorial—remembering what was accomplished. Like communion today, they celebrate rather than atone. The eighth day acceptance echoes Jesus' resurrection on the eighth day, the first day of the new week. Our worship now is remembrance, not repetition. We don't sacrifice for forgiveness but celebrate the forgiveness already won. How do you remember Christ's sacrifice in your daily life? Let gratitude for His completed work transform your worship from obligation to celebration. His blood speaks a better word.

Day 5: A Temple Yet to Come

Reading: Ezekiel 43:10-12; Revelation 21:1-4, 22-27

Devotional:

This magnificent temple has never been built. Its dimensions exceed Solomon's glory and Herod's grandeur. It awaits fulfillment when God dwells with His people forever, when Israel embraces their Messiah, when Jesus rules from His throne. Yet Revelation shows us something greater still—ultimately, the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple. Every earthly temple points to this: God with us. Emmanuel. The trajectory of Scripture moves toward unmediated presence. Today, through the Holy Spirit, God dwells within you. You are His temple. How does knowing you carry God's presence change how you live? Walk today as a living temple, holy and acceptable, until that day when we see Him face to face.

"This is the law of the temple: The whole area surrounding the mountaintop is most holy. Behold, this is the law of the temple." - Ezekiel 43:12