

EZEKIEL'S TEMPLE - IS THIS VISION STILL TO BE FULFILLED?

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The book of Ezekiel closes with a vision (chapters 40-48) of a grand temple. There are many people today who believe that the vision Ezekiel received regarding the temple will still be fulfilled in the near future. Is this true? Well, it is true that the vision has never in the past been fulfilled, because we have never seen such a grand temple as the one in Ezekiel's vision. But is it also true that the vision will still be fulfilled in the near or distant future? This is what we will examine in this study.

Some believe it will be fulfilled in the building of a 'third temple' in Israel before the return of Christ, which a particular group of people in Israel are actively pursuing. Many of those who believe in a coming literal fulfillment of Ezekiel's temple believe the vision will be fulfilled after the return of Christ and during a thousand year millennial reign on earth. Others believe that this vision of Ezekiel is to be understood symbolically, as representing God's true church. Now while there are spiritual lessons to learn, as there is throughout all of scripture, was this God's original purpose of the vision, or did God have a literal fulfillment in mind? I believe there was to be a literal fulfillment. But I will show you why this vision **has never** been literally fulfilled and why it **will never** be literally fulfilled.

So why wasn't this vision fulfilled with the Jewish people? It was promised to the Jews on **condition** of their fidelity to God, a condition which they did not meet; and they therefore deprived themselves forever of the sanctuary shown to Ezekiel. The following scripture tells us that the building of the temple seen by Ezekiel was something that depended entirely upon the attitude of the Jewish nation towards their sins and their relationship with Jehovah:

*Ezekiel 43:9-11 ... 'Now let them put away their whoredom, and the carcasses of their kings, far from me, and I will dwell in the midst of them for ever. Thou son of man, **shew the house to the house of Israel, that they may be ashamed of their iniquities:** and let them measure the pattern. And **IF they be ashamed of all that they have done, shew them the form of the house, and the fashion thereof, and the goings out thereof, and the comings in thereof, and all the forms thereof, and all the ordinances thereof, and all the forms thereof, and all the laws thereof: and write it in their sight, that they may keep the whole form thereof, and all the ordinances thereof, and do them.**'*

Jeremiah 18:7-10 ... 'At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy it; If that nation, against whom I have

*pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them. And at what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant it; **If it do evil in my sight, that it obey not my voice, then I will repent of the good, wherewith I said I would benefit them.***

Do you see? This vision of a new grand temple was **conditional** upon the Israelites being 'ashamed' of their sins, to repent of their ways. This vision should have ignited a great desire in the Israelites to reform and turn back to Jehovah to walk in His ways and His holiness, which could be the very reason God gave this vision through Ezekiel. But what was the response instead? Well, Ezekiel received this vision while captive in Babylon, around 574 B.C, about 36 years before the return of the Jews to Jerusalem. But when the time came for the Jews to return from Babylon to Jerusalem, many were content with their new lives in Babylon (the world) and did not want to return. Those who did return still fell into their old ways of unbelief, and thus this prevented the vision from being literally fulfilled with the Jewish people. And so the temple which was rebuilt was a much smaller, less grand temple than the one in Ezekiel's vision.

So what about the belief that Ezekiel's temple vision will be literally fulfilled during the 1000 year millennium?

To begin with, the belief that the 1000 year millennium will be spent on earth is a false teaching. We have a study page which shows that the millennium will be spent in heaven, not on earth ([SEE HERE](#)). There are numerous problems with the belief that Ezekiel's temple will still be literally fulfilled, which I will now show:

*Ezekiel 40:39,43 ...'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 within were hooks, an hand broad, fastened round about: and upon the tables was **the flesh of the offering.***

*Ezekiel 43:18-20 ...'And he said unto me, Son of man, thus saith the Lord God; These are the ordinances of the altar in the day when they shall make it, **to offer burnt offerings thereon, and to sprinkle blood thereon.** And thou shalt give to **the priests the Levites** that be of the seed of Zadok, which approach unto me, to minister unto me, saith the Lord God, **a young bullock for a sin offering.** And thou shalt **take of the blood thereof, and put it on the four horns of it, and on the four corners of the settle, and upon the border round about: thus shalt thou cleanse and purge it.***

What does God command here in Ezekiel's vision concerning the temple? Ordinances of sacrifices. Now if we adopt the view that the temple in question was one which was promised to the Jews, if faithful, during the time of the Mosaic system of worship, with animal sacrifices and offerings, **BEFORE to the crucifixion of Christ**, then all is consistent and harmonious. But adopt the view that this temple is to be literally fulfilled **AFTER** the crucifixion of Christ, whether before or after the second coming of Christ, then we have a **HUGE** problem. Because it is a huge absurdity to think that God would renew the old sacrificial system again, as Christ was sacrificed **ONCE FOR SIN**:

*Hebrews 9:25-28 ...'Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others; For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now **ONCE** in the end of the world hath he appeared to put*

*away sin **by the sacrifice of himself**. And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: **So Christ was once** offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.'*

Jesus Christ, the 'Lamb of God' was sacrificed ONCE for sin, which all the sacrifices of the old covenant pointed to and were fulfilled and DONE AWAY WITH. Therefore, to renew these old animal sacrifices would be to spit in the face of Christ which these sacrifices pointed to. Now some people believe that the renewing of these animal sacrifices would simply be a 'reminder' of the sacrifice of Christ. But what did Paul say in Colossians 2 regarding the old Mosaic ordinances? That Christ '**blotted them out,**' and that they were a '**SHADOW** of things to come.' So those shadowy sacrifices and ordinances met their **FULFILLMENT** in the first coming of Christ and His crucifixion.

Why would you need the shadow again when you have the REAL thing the shadow pointed to? It makes no sense!

What about the 'prince' that is mentioned in Ezekiel's vision in chapter 46? This causes another problem with the belief that the vision is yet to be literally fulfilled. Those who hold to the belief that this vision is to yet be literally fulfilled, tend to believe that this 'prince' is a type of Christ, or even Christ Himself. But the following verse presents a problem with this view:

*Ezekiel 45:22 ...'And upon that day shall **the prince prepare for himself** and for all the people of the land **a bullock for a sin offering.**'*

This 'prince' was to offer a **sin offering for himself**, whereas Hebrews 4:15 and Hebrews 9:28 tells us that Jesus Christ was 'without sin.' Therefore this 'prince' could NOT be Christ in a future temple, and it is a blasphemous thing to think that this 'prince' could be Christ. But again, if we apply this temple vision to what could have been for the Jews in the Mosaic dispensation, if they were faithful, then all is in harmony. The Jews would have had one prince at a time, who himself would also have had to offer sacrifice for his own sins.

We could also mention the fact that in the temple vision of Ezekiel, God instructs that the Levites would serve in the temple (Ezekiel 43:19; 44:15), to offer sacrifices before the LORD. But now under Christ, there has been a change in the priesthood, from the Levitical priesthood to the 'Melchizedek' (Hebrews 7:11-17), with Christ being our High Priest FOREVER. Thus we will NEVER go back to the Aaronic, Levitical priesthood, whether you are a Jew of the flesh or Gentile.

So we can see that this vision of Ezekiel will never be fulfilled in a literal way, with a new literal temple, because God instructed that the old priesthood would continue the old sacrificial system in that temple, **which would be a complete DENIAL of Christ and His sacrifice for our sins**. But we know from the New Testament that that system is now FOREVER done away with in Christ. God tells us in the New Testament that we, His people, are now the "*temple of the living God*" (1 Corinthians 3:16). So we have moved from God dwelling in a building, to God dwelling in His people. And while there is still a temple in heaven, the true tabernacle that God made, where Jesus ministers on our behalf as our High Priest (Hebrews 8), there is no longer a need for an earthly temple building. And any such move to build one will NOT be of God. **It doesn't matter whether you are a Jew of the**

flesh or a Gentile of the flesh, as we are ALL ONE in Christ (Galatians 3:28). A new temple on earth will NOT be of God.

Let me just repeat that. Any move to build a 'third temple,' or to 'fulfill' the vision of Ezekiel in a literal building, will NOT be of God.

This is important to understand, as Satan will do certain things to deceive the world into thinking it is of God. So if we see another temple being built that seems to fit the Ezekiel prophecy, then know it is not God behind it. The earthly temple building is DONE, FINISHED, never to be supported or inhabited by God ever again. The Ezekiel prophecy was clearly a prophecy that COULD have been fulfilled under the Mosaic dispensation had the Israelites been faithful to God. But they weren't. Instead they waxed worse and worse, until they reached such a bad condition, that they even rejected God's own Son, their Saviour! God is not behind any future temple building. It will be a deception!

We are now the temple of the Living God and Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God, is now our High Priest in the heavenly temple, ministering on our behalf to cleanse and put away our sin. This should be our focus, so that we can be ready for the soon return of Christ.