

International Bible Lessons Commentary

Ezekiel 43:1-12

New Revised Standard Version

International Bible Lessons

Sunday, November 2, 2014

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The **[International Bible Lesson](#)** (*Uniform Sunday School Lessons Series*) for **Sunday, November 2, 2014**, is from **Ezekiel 43:1-12**. **Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further** follow the verse-by-verse *International Bible Lesson Commentary* below. **Study Hints for Thinking Further**, a study guide for teachers, discusses the five questions below to help with class preparation and in conducting class discussion; these hints are available on the [International Bible Lessons Commentary](#) website. The weekly *International Bible Lesson* is usually posted each Saturday before the lesson is scheduled to be taught.

International Bible Lesson Commentary

Ezekiel 43:1-12

(Ezekiel 43:1) Then he brought me to the gate, the gate facing east.

Ezekiel was a priest or the son of a priest who was taken into exile in Babylon in about 598 BC with the first deportation of Jerusalem's leaders and other important people. Ezekiel lived near the Chebar Canal or River in Babylon. The real center of Jewish life and worship moved to Babylon when Jerusalem and the temple were finally destroyed in 587 BC. After 25 years of exile, Ezekiel was given a vision where he was transported to Jerusalem and shown a new temple and given the specifications for a new temple that the people were to build when they returned from exile. God gave the vision to Ezekiel to encourage the people by telling them that they would return to their homeland when God ended their time of punishment (which was to be a total of seventy years according to the prophet Jeremiah: see 2 Chronicles 36: 11-23).

(Ezekiel 43:2) And there, the glory of the God of Israel was coming from the east; the sound was like the sound of mighty waters; and the earth shone with his glory.

The new temple had gates on the north, south, and east. The main gate on the east side faced the rising sun. The LORD had left the temple through the east gate because the priests had defiled Solomon's temple and made it unfit for our holy God to remain there. Therefore, in Ezekiel's vision God returned to His temple from the east. The vision

showed the LORD returning to the visionary temple through the east gate from which He had departed. Babylon was about 800 miles east of Jerusalem. The glory of the God of Israel was brighter than the sun that God created, and God's creation reflected, showed or revealed His glory. The sound of His coming was probably as loud as a giant waterfall or an ocean tide running toward the shore during a hurricane.

(Ezekiel 43:3) The vision I saw was like the vision that I had seen when he came to destroy the city, and like the vision that I had seen by the river Chebar; and I fell upon my face.

Ezekiel saw a vision of God that communicated to him some of the attributes of God (see Ezekiel 1:1-28). God is the LORD over all creation and God sees everything throughout all of creation. Nothing can be hidden from our all-seeing and all-knowing God. God can go wherever He wills and God is holy and just. Because of the sins of the house of Israel, God destroyed the city of Jerusalem and the temple using the Babylonian army.

(Ezekiel 43:4) As the glory of the LORD entered the temple by the gate facing east,

Ezekiel's vision of a new temple began in Ezekiel 40:1. God gave a detailed plan for a new temple with careful measurements. When the Jews returned to Jerusalem after their seventy years of exile, they built a new temple, but not according to the vision God gave Ezekiel. When we do things God's way and according to God's revealed will, God will come and abide or stay with us as He has promised. As we begin to do God's will, God gives us more details and provisions to complete what He wants us to do. The vision that God gave Ezekiel was sufficient for them to begin the work on the new temple according to God's plan through Ezekiel.

(Ezekiel 43:5) the spirit lifted me up, and brought me into the inner court; and the glory of the LORD filled the temple.

We have no indication from the Scriptures that God ever came and indwelt the second temple as God did the tabernacle of Moses that was built according to God's will exactly as God showed Moses or the temple of Solomon (see Exodus 39:42-43; 40:33-38 and 1 Chronicles 28:6-12; 2 Chronicles 7:1-3). The Spirit of God now indwells those who repent of their sins and trust in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior (see Acts 2:4; Acts 4:31; Acts 7:55; Acts 13:52).

(Ezekiel 43:6) While the man was standing beside me, I heard someone speaking to me out of the temple.

The man standing beside Ezekiel was a messenger of God or an angel. He led Ezekiel to the temple and the Spirit of God lifted Ezekiel into the inner court. In his vision, only the LORD and the prince [possibly the Messiah] were to be permitted to enter the inner

court by the east gate, so Ezekiel was lifted by the Spirit of God over the wall. The LORD spoke to Ezekiel from out of the temple.

(Ezekiel 43:7) He said to me: Mortal, this is the place of my throne and the place for the soles of my feet, where I will reside among the people of Israel forever. The house of Israel shall no more defile my holy name, neither they nor their kings, by their whoring, and by the corpses of their kings at their death.

When the LORD spoke to Ezekiel, He called him mortal or human or son of man depending on your translation of the Bible. In the Book of Daniel, the title “Son of Man” applied to the Messiah, which was the title Jesus most often preferred to use about himself. God spoke to Ezekiel directly in his vision, not through the messenger. God revealed that the temple would be the place of His throne and His footstool; while God continued to reside in heaven He would also be present among His people, and God encouraged those in exile by telling Ezekiel that He would be found and worshiped again in Jerusalem in a new temple. If the returning exiles built the new temple according to God’s plan, God said He did not want any idol worship to ever be done in the temple again; furthermore, God did not want the corpses any Judean or Israelite kings near His temple, which would defile it again.

(Ezekiel 43:8) When they placed their threshold by my threshold and their doorposts beside my doorposts, with only a wall between me and them, they were defiling my holy name by their abominations that they committed; therefore I have consumed them in my anger.

King Solomon built the temple next to his palace and only a wall separated his palace from the temple. In his palace, King Solomon and his wives worshiped their idols in addition to their supposed worshiping of the LORD; later, the Levites would even worship idols in the temple, which defiled it even further. Unfortunately, the kings who followed King Solomon (with a few notable exceptions such as Josiah) performed greater abominations with their idols than King Solomon did; therefore, God justly punished them and the nation by destroying the palace and the defiled temple.

(Ezekiel 43:9) Now let them put away their idolatry and the corpses of their kings far from me, and I will reside among them forever.

God expected Ezekiel to share every detail of his vision with the exiles in Babylon. God expected the descendants of the kings of Judah to repent of their sins and not repeat the sins of their fathers. God’s promise to reside among His people and their leaders forever was conditioned on their building their new temple according to God’s design, their turning from idolatry, and their not burying their kings in the presence of the LORD’s temple, which could lead to their honoring their former kings more than God.

(Ezekiel 43:10) As for you, mortal, describe the temple to the house of Israel, and let them measure the pattern; and let them be ashamed of their iniquities.

God expected Ezekiel to share his vision with the exiles in Babylon; they were to learn the new temple's pattern for later construction, and they were to be ashamed of their sins that had led to the first temple's destruction. No leaders or skilled laborers remained in Jerusalem after the city, the palace, and temple were destroyed in 587 BC. Though they would be in exile for about forty-five more years, God wanted them to know that the house of Israel would return to Jerusalem someday and God would be with them. God wanted them to be ashamed of their sins, learn from their past mistakes and Ezekiel's vision, and be prepared to rebuild their temple according to His pattern.

(Ezekiel 43:11) When they are ashamed of all that they have done, make known to them the plan of the temple, its arrangement, its exits and its entrances, and its whole form--all its ordinances and its entire plan and all its laws; and write it down in their sight, so that they may observe and follow the entire plan and all its ordinances.

Only after the people realized with shame the sins that had led God to destroy their city and temple did Ezekiel share with them the further Word of the LORD regarding their restoration and His plans for a new temple. They needed to recognize their true moral guilt and not shift the blame for their temple's destruction away from themselves. God expected them to obey His Word and vision that He had given through Ezekiel. God expected them to do everything according to His ordinances and His plans when they returned to Jerusalem. However, they failed to follow God's "entire plan and all its ordinances." They continued to do many things their own way instead of God's way; therefore, we have no evidence that God ever entered their second temple no matter how it was beautified in later years by others, including King Herod.

(Ezekiel 43:12) This is the law of the temple: the whole territory on the top of the mountain all around shall be most holy. This is the law of the temple.

Since the top of the mountain and all around it was to be most holy to the LORD and this was God's law (not just mere advice), they were to build no palace for a king and no burial ground for kings near or around the new temple. Since the body of a Christian is the temple of God, a Christian and everything that he chooses to be a part of his life should be most holy to the LORD – this would be "the law of the temple" for all believers in the Lord Jesus Christ forever.

Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further

1. Who was supposed to build the temple in Ezekiel's vision according to the plan God gave Ezekiel?
2. Why do you think the most important temple gate faced east?
3. In his vision, how was the person who met Ezekiel on the very high mountain in Jerusalem different from Ezekiel's vision of the Lord?
4. What was the most encouraging and hopeful part of Ezekiel's vision?
5. What were the people who returned from exile supposed to stop doing when they returned to their land?

Begin or close your class by reading the short weekly *International Bible Lesson*.

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