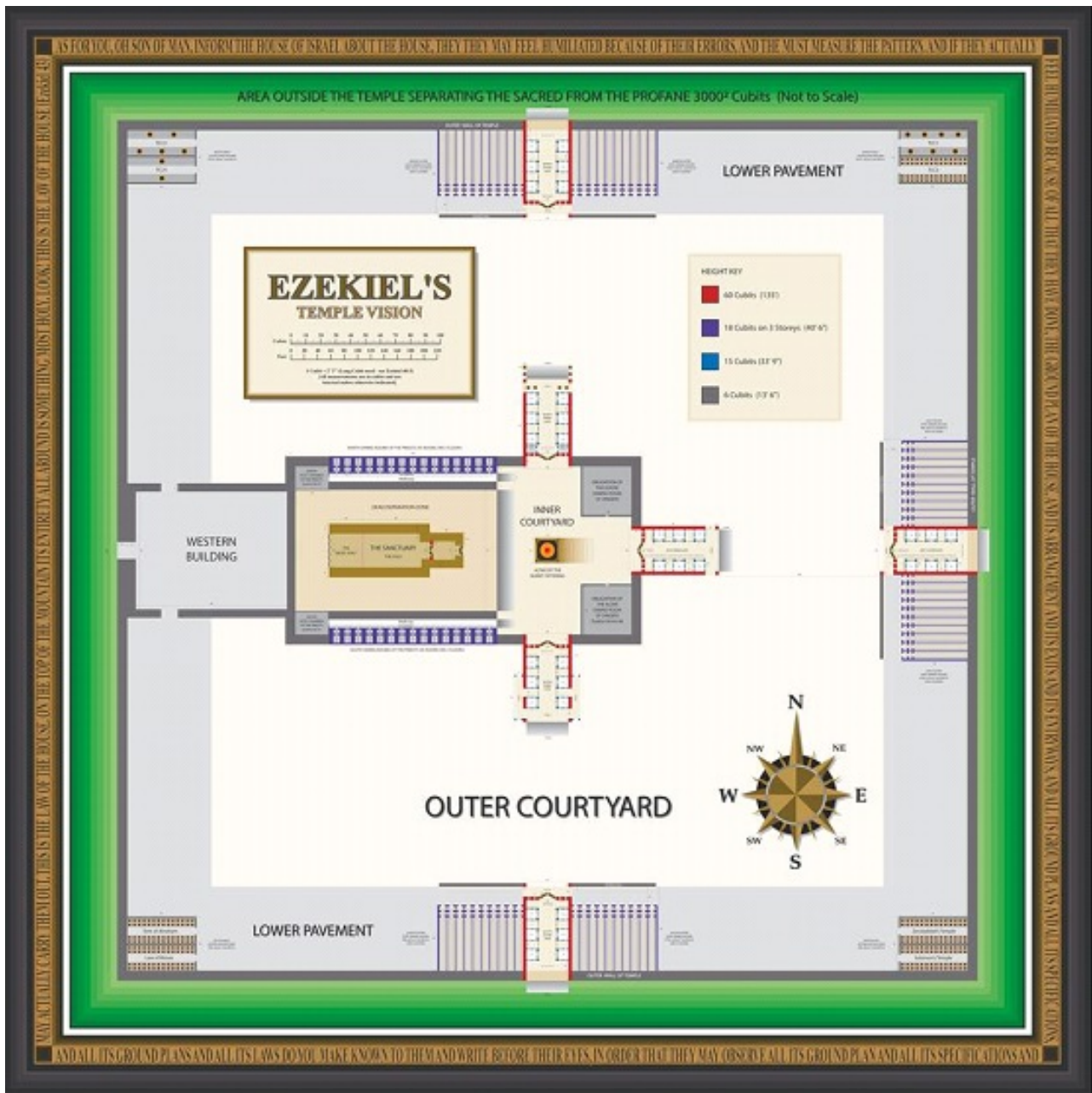


Ezekiel Chapters 40-42 - John Karmelich

Title: Why God is obsessed with building plans!



When we think of the bible, it mainly describes people as sinners, a God who gives us rules on how He expects us to live and in exchange for living as He desires, He promises us an eternal wonderful future! Every now and then the bible pauses to give architectural details. This is one of those spots and it's best to include a picture as part of this broadcast. So why do we get these architectural details? What these chapters describe is a temple that'll exist when Jesus returns to rule the world from Israel. We get that He'll rule there and it's describing this temple to give Israelites a hope for a better future! Still I ponder why have these chapters on all of these architectural details, just as many chapters are in Exodus on the

architectural details of a portable tabernacle? After all, the Bible could have just said, Jesus is going to rule the world one day and there is a temple rebuilt at that time!

To answer all of this, realize there are lots of details not mentioned. There is no mention of the "Ark of the Covenant" (the most holy object in the Exodus tabernacle and in Solomon's Temple). The text does not have any mention of silver and gold in Ezekiel's temple (yet other places such as Isaiah, it mentions there's gold then!) I know of an organization in Israel that built a model of it, which includes plumbing and electricity. They figure the Bible is silent on those issues, so they included it! One obvious reason for all the details here, is God is emphasizing it's all literal! With lots of details about animal sacrifices beginning again, it teaches us that the Israelites will remember "The Cross" and give priests a job then, to help Israelites at that time focus on God! Even with all that stated, I'd argue God wants us to grasp the LITERALNESS of His eternal plans for the world. Describing a temple that'll literally be built at least 2,600 years after this was written from when it was described included location on the side of Mount Zion shows us God keeps His Word, and we must accept that!

Still, I keep pondering why does God give all of these specific details of this temple? Let's be honest, it could have just said, there was a magnificent new temple different in design than the previous ones and it is used for the priests to work sacrifices (again to remember what Jesus did). All I can figure is God's showing us that He keeps His word "Down to the detail"! Yes, someone can build it one day and say it is exactly how Ezekiel described it, but to the Israelites in captivity the fact it would be built one day is a miracle all to itself. Still if God says it'll happen "just like this" I take it seriously and the fact Israel's back in the land as a country again after 2,600 years is good enough proof for me that this will occur in the future sometime. One thing to keep in mind is the whole thing is about a mile square. That is more in size than the old city of Jerusalem! Revelation 11:13 speaks of a great earthquake that will move its geography around (my interpretation). I'm sure it'll be built as Ezekiel predicted at a flat spot which can handle an area about the size of 10 football fields!

Another thing to keep in mind this is a very "Jewish thing". Revelation speaks of the church located in a "new Jerusalem" that comes down from heaven. When I think of Ezekiel's temple and a return to the sacrificial animal system, to me it's about those who survived the "Great Tribulation" and for survivors of that to honor God for what He did. That also means there will be natural death as obviously animals are still killed for those sacrifices. Isaiah 65:20 says people will live a lot longer then, but they'll still at that time! Bottom line, it (this future temple) is here for Israelite priests to lead those alive then to draw closer to God and this is a reminder of what Jesus did for them as well as for us!

With that said, let me discuss these three chapters. Ezekiel said he saw this in the 25th year of captivity of the Israelites in (what is today Iraq). I don't know about you, but if I was stuck somewhere for all of that time, I'd give up hope of God ever coming through. Chapters 40-48 are Ezekiel's final vision, that's to give them hope that despite the horror of all the death and destruction, God still has a plan for Israel, as He gave His Word that they'd be in the land again one day with God Himself (Messiah) ruling them!

In this vision, Ezekiel sees a man with measuring tools. As a real estate appraiser, tools to measure the size of buildings are used in my job! Ezekiel said He was bronze in appearance. Biblically whenever it mentions bronze, that's associated with judgment as brass can withstand high heat! Anyway, this man measured every detail inside and outside of this structure. I wonder (guess) the measuring guy's an Old Testament appearance of Jesus. My reason is Ezekiel was allowed to follow him through every step of the process except the most holy place, as only the High Priest (i.e., God's representative to man) could enter there!

Anyway, these chapters give endless details of exact layouts. The priests there are to be descendants of a specific line of priests (tied to 1st Kings Chapter 1, work this temple. How will we know who is that group? In Chapter 48, the land of Israel will be once again divided by tribe. If God's God, He will make it obvious again which Israelites belong to which tribe and people living there at that time will be able to identify that specific group of priests! Like that temple model built in Jerusalem today, I figure the parts God doesn't say how they can build it, can be improvised (such as plumbing and electricity).

Bottom line, these three chapters are loaded with architectural specifics on every aspect not only of the structure (inside and courtyard) but also mentions an auxiliary building within the compound. Again, I know it's easy to say, "OK, Ezekiel said to build it like this, we'll build it like this!" Where God comes into play is to create this high mountain in Israel big enough for a "mile square compound" with a level surface available for it! Jerusalem or surrounding areas as it stands today doesn't have land like that to build on today! Chapter 43 says God wanted the Israelites then to realize their guilt before Him and all of these architectural details definitely does that!

I also noticed the curtain to the most holy place includes cherubim rendering on its design. As opposed to the cherubim mentioned early in this book, these cherubim have only two faces! One face is human, as Jesus remains human for eternity! The other is a lion, representing the mightiest creature on earth! It represents God. (Think mighty!) Between each cherub is a palm tree! Palm branches as we know from "Palm Sunday", represent what is used to worship God. This temple is designed for Israelites and earth dwellers (non-Jews) who survived all that Revelation "bad stuff", a central place to focus on what God did for their sins. It is their way to look back at what Jesus did (past tense), just as we Christians focus on our past tense for all the sins we ever have or ever will do in our lifetime!

With all that said, realize these are some of the toughest chapters in the bible to understand, as they tell of a time that hasn't occurred yet! All we can do is interpret the clues of what is said and what isn't the future temple area built after the "bad Revelation stuff" time in history. As to why we don't get an "ark of the covenant" here, I suspect (just that) it's because the Messiah Himself will be there, and the focus is on Him and not the ark. Speaking of Him, His big entrance into this structure is the key point for the next chapter. So as hard as these chapters are to follow with their repetitive architectural details, we got to realize in effect it's not for the church, but for Israel. God put it here for us to study so we realize the eternal future is not just for "the church" it is also for God to keep His unconditional promises to Israel as an entity as well! These architectural details are here to remind us of those promises!

With that said, hope you liked this study. I wrote a more detailed one some years back. If you want to read that, click on one of the two links below. It's a joy to study and write this and I'm grateful for you reading it. The rest of this email is links to questions you may have. If you're new here, you're always welcome to e-mail me. Thanks again for reading this!