

This lesson uses excerpts from Chapters 43, 44 and 46 to give us a preview of the future temple that will be built in Jerusalem and the manner of the worship of the LORD during Christ's millennial reign on earth.

Ezekiel 40-43 describe in almost architectural detail this future temple that will be the center of the worship of the LORD on earth. In a vision, an angel gives Ezekiel a tour of the new temple, measuring the dimensions of various features of the temple as Ezekiel watches. Chapters 44-46 describe the order of worship that will be established for the new temple.

Ezekiel 43

¹ Afterward he brought me to the gate, even the gate that looketh toward the east:

The angel that has been guiding Ezekiel around this vision of the future temple now brings him to the eastern gate of the temple complex in order to witness the arrival of the LORD coming to occupy the temple. Both the tabernacle of Moses and the temple built by Solomon were validated by the presence of the LORD taking residence, and here the millennial temple will become the house of God in similar fashion.

² 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.

The brightness of God's glory illuminated the surrounding countryside as He arrives at the temple and the voice of the LORD was loud like the sound of many waters. These descriptions of the presence of the LORD mirror other descriptions in the Bible of God's presence.

³ 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.

“And it was according to the appearance of the vision which I saw” - Ezekiel compare what he sees to previous visions that he's had of the LORD's presence.

“even according to the vision that I saw when I came to destroy the city” - Likely referring to the visions of chapter 8-11 where the LORD was declaring the impending destruction of Jerusalem because of their continuing lack of repentance even after Nebuchadnezzar had carried many Jews away to Babylon.

“and the visions were like the vision that I saw by the river Chebar” - Refers to the vision Ezekiel describes in chapter 1.

“and I fell upon my face” - Ezekiel was so overcome by the glory of the LORD that he fell on his face in worship and reverence.

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

The glory of the LORD entered the temple through the eastern gate and Spirit of God moves Ezekiel in the vision to the inner court so that he could see that the temple will filled with the glory of God. The glory of the LORD had filled the tabernacle and Solomon's temple in similar fashion at their dedications.

⁶ And I heard him speaking unto me out of the house; and the man stood by me. ⁷ 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.

“And I heard him speaking unto me out of the house; and the man stood by me” - The LORD speaks to Ezekiel while the angel (“the man”) who has been guiding Ezekiel was standing beside him.

“And he said unto me, Son of man, the place of my throne...shall the house of Israel no more defile...” - The LORD declares that the place where He will reside and His name will no longer be defiled by the sins of Israel. There are three noteworthy things He says about where He will reside: (1) **it is the place of His throne** – He will rule over Israel and the world from there; (2) **it is the place of the soles of His feet** – it will be the place where He will walk and do His will; (3) **it will be in the midst of the nation of Israel** – the land of Israel will be the center of the LORD's presence and government on earth.

Ezekiel 44

¹ Then he brought me back the way of the gate of the outward sanctuary which looketh toward the east; and it was shut. ² Then said the LORD unto me; This gate shall be shut, it shall not be opened, and no man shall enter in by it; because the LORD, the God of Israel, hath entered in by it, therefore it shall be shut.

The eastern gate through which the LORD's presence and glory entered the temple complex will be permanently closed so that no one else but the LORD can enter through it. No human being is worthy to enter through the same gate that the LORD used. Even though the LORD does not need doors or gates to allow Him access to enter or leave anywhere, the fact that the LORD enters through the east gate will make it sacred and off-limits to anyone else to use.

³ *It is* for the prince; the prince, he shall sit in it to eat bread before the LORD; he shall enter by the way of the porch of that gate, and shall go out by the way of the same.

“It is for the prince” - The words “It is” are in italics, meaning that they are supplied by the translators. This phrase could easily be translated “As for the prince...”

“the prince, he shall sit in it to eat bread before the LORD” - This prince has been interpreted by some to be the Messiah, but this is unlikely because in Ezek. 45:22 the prince is said to offer a sacrifice as a sin offering for himself and the people. Also, in Ezek. 46:16-18 it mentions that this prince has sons. This prince must be a human ruler who serves to administer the LORD’s will among the people. While he is also not allowed to pass through the eastern gate, he alone has the privilege of using the porch of the eastern gate as a place to eat bread before the LORD in worship.

“he shall enter by the way of the porch of that gate, and shall go out by the way of the same” - This prince may enter the porch of the eastern gate and sit there before the LORD to eat bread but he has to leave the way he came because he will not be allowed to enter the sanctuary through that gate.

⁴ Then brought he me the way of the north gate before the house: and I looked, and, behold, the glory of the LORD filled the house of the LORD: and I fell upon my face.

The angel takes Ezekiel through the north gate of the temple complex and from this vantage point he sees again that the house of the LORD was filled with the glory of the LORD. The sight is overwhelming and Ezekiel falls on his face in worship of the LORD.

Ezekiel 46

¹ Thus saith the Lord GOD; The gate of the inner court that looketh toward the east shall be shut the six working days; but on the sabbath it shall be opened, and in the day of the new moon it shall be opened.

Not to be confused with the eastern gate of the outer court which will be permanently closed after the arrival of the LORD, the eastern gate of the inner court will be closed except on sabbaths and the day of the new moon. On these days the gate will be opened to provide access to the people so that they may worship the LORD.

² And the prince shall enter by the way of the porch of that gate without, and shall stand by the post of the gate, and the priests shall prepare his burnt offering and his peace offerings, and he shall worship at the threshold of the gate: then he shall go forth; but the gate shall not be shut until the evening. ³ Likewise the people of the land shall worship at the door of this gate before the LORD in the sabbaths and in the new moons.

On the sabbath days and the days of the new moon the prince, the human ruler we met in Ezek. 44:3, will stand outside the eastern gate of the inner court as the priests prepare the offerings in his behalf. There he will worship the LORD and leave when he is finished. The gate, however, will remain open until evening (sunset) to allow the people of the land to likewise worship the LORD.

⁴ And the burnt offering that the prince shall offer unto the LORD in the sabbath day shall be six lambs without blemish, and a ram without blemish.

Verses 4-7 prescribe what offerings the prince will be required to make on these worship days. The burnt offering for the sabbaths were to be six lambs and a ram, all without blemish. The offerings described in these verses are generally larger than what was prescribed under the Mosaic covenant.