

Old Testament 44  
Every Thing Shall Live Whither the River Cometh  
(Ezekiel 43-44; 47)  
By Lenet Hadley Read

(Here are insights into Ezekiel's visions of the Temple. **A major sign of Restored Israel is the Temple**).

I. The absence of the Temple was always a witness that the Lord has forsaken His people. When Israel no longer had God's favor, the Temple, or sacred instruments within the Temple, were consistently taken from them.\*

A. It is significant that in 586 B.C., Babylon destroyed Solomon's Temple and took the temple's instruments, along with the Jews themselves, into captivity.

B. This destruction and the captivity was a final witness that the Lord's presence was withdrawn from ancient Israel at that time.

C. "And the heathen shall know that the house of the Israel went into captivity for their iniquity: because they trespassed against me, therefore hid I my face from them, and gave them into the hand of their enemies" (Ezekiel 39:23).

II. Among the chief reasons for the captivity and loss of the temple was that Judah "profaned his Temple" and "polluted His Sabbaths."

A. "Her priests have ...profaned mine holy things" (Ezekiel 22:26).

III. Likewise, **the return of the Temple among the people always witnessed that the Lord had accepted their repentance and again accepted them as His people.**

A. This was **one major reason the Lord showed Ezekiel, still in captivity, a vision of their future Temple**, which would be restored to them when they completed their seventy (70) years of captivity in Babylon.

1. The Lord gave instructions of how to build the temple and to keep its ordinances.

2. **"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.... That they may keep the form thereof..."** (Ezekiel 43:10-11).

3. Zerubbabel re-built the temple after their return. To re-build the Temple was one of their first desires and accepted responsibilities!

IV. But Ezekiel's measurements and form of the Temple **are particularly significant because they bore witness of Jesus the Christ**, who would come to Israel after they had returned from their Babylonian captivity.

A. The Temple's Measurements represent Jesus the Christ, **and His standard of measurement against which Israel would be judged.**

B. Paul's teachings provide explanation: "And he gave some apostles... For the perfecting of the saints...[until] we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, **unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ** (Ephesians 4:11-13). (Emphasis added).

V. When Jesus cleansed the temple in His day, it was a witness that Israel had again “profaned” His Temple.

- A. It was not just the money changers He cast out. He was warning the priesthood leaders who had obtained their positions through bribery, and were corrupt.
- B. Christ warned that the Temple would once more be destroyed (when He warned of the Destruction of Jerusalem Luke 23:28-30). This was fulfilled when the Romans destroyed the city and the temple in 70 A.D.
- C. Until its destruction, the Temple had still been a central place for early Christian worship (Acts 3:1). Christians were forewarned, fled, and escaped destruction.
- D. However true Christians no longer observed the Mosaic Law. While full information is lost, there are many witnesses early Christians somehow observed Temple ordinances as we know them today.
- E. The fact that most Christians no longer have temples or know how to use the Temple Ordinances of the Melchizedek Priesthood show they are not True Israel.

VI. Ezekiel’s vision had dual application for the Lord’s Future temples. It included that Temple to be established among **His returning Remnant of Israel in the Last Days.**

A. He promised to bring them back from being scattered among all nations into the **bond of the covenant:**

“And I will bring you out from the people, and will gather you out of the countries wherein ye are scattered, with a mighty hand...” (20:34); “And I will bring you into the bond of the covenant” (20:37).

B. And He promised to establish a new temple among them:

“For in **mine holy mountain** [a phrase for a Temple] in the mountain of the height of Israel,... there shall all the house of Israel,... serve me: there will I accept them, and there will I require your offerings,... with all your holy things.” (20:40). (Emphasis added).

**C. So Ezekiel’s view of the temple included the Latter-day temples, rebuilt after Israel is returned once more from bondage under a greater Babylon (the Gentile apostasy), when a remnant of Israel are again re-gathered.**

VII. So in these, the Last Days, the Lord immediately commanded His Latter-day Israel to build such temples.

- A. When Israel was first called out of Egypt, it was at Sinai, in the wilderness, that they were first commanded to set up “The Wilderness Tabernacle,” but in essence the first temple (Ezekiel 20:10).
- B. Similarly, the Latter-day Saints were called to go into the Wilderness of their time, around Kirtland, OH, and there to build their first temple (D&C88:119).
- C. For **Temples are a major witness that here stands the true Israel, and that God’s presence is once again among them.**

VIII. Ezekiel also taught that when **the future Temple comes, life will issue from it to heal the dead.**

A. After Jesus the Christ first came, who was the pattern for the temple, and was buried in the grave, **He then brought resurrection to all through His own resurrection!**

1. Christ is the True Temple and the Fountain of Living Waters which can be described thus: **“Everything shall live whither the River cometh! (See Ezekiel 47:9).**
2. Furthermore, in the Millennium, because of Christ, all death will literally cease. **“And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death ...” ( Rev. 21:4).**

IX. There is yet one more layer of meaning.

A. While there may be some way in which a future temple sends forth waters to heal the Dead Sea, **the greater reality is that from Latter-day Temples are coming Living Waters which are healing all the deceased!**

1. For the works going on in Latter-day Saint Temples today, in baptismal fonts, built as commanded below ground level, (See D&C 128:13), are healing the dead, and bringing them blessings **of Eternal Life.**

B. **This baptismal work beneath our temples will continue throughout the Millennium until every soul who ever lived on the earth has the opportunity to accept or reject baptism into the Kingdom of God.**

X. Ezekiel provides other choice witnesses of Christ’s Millennial reign.

A. Hidden amidst much of the details of Ezekiel’s vision of the temple are other witnesses of Christ’s millennial reign. To truly understand this, we must remember the temple signifies “being in the presence of the Lord.” We must always remember *the Lord Himself is the ultimate Temple* (See John 2:19, 21).

B. For example, in these Ezekiel chapters we find this lovely detail regarding His presence then.

1. Just as ancient Israel camped around the Tabernacle, so the righteous of Latter-day Israel will surround Him in worship during the Millennium. He shall dwell in the center, and the name of Jerusalem shall become “The Lord is there” (Ezek. 48:35).

XI. In summary, we see that Ezekiel’s vision of the temple prophesied many wonderful truths: 1. The Restoration of the Temple after Babylonian Captivity. 2. Christ’s coming in the Meridian of Time to bring life to the dead. 3. His virtues will be the standard by which all will be measured. 4. There will be a Restoration of Temples after the ultimate scattering of Israel by the Latter-day Babylon. 5. In Latter-day temples, work for the dead will bring Eternal Life to the deceased. 6. His dwelling among the righteous in the Millennium will be the Ultimate Temple and the Ultimate Fountain of Living Waters which will bring life to all things.

**When we participate in family history and temple work, providing saving ordinances for the deceased, we are living up to at least one important quality that reaches Christ’s stature: We are becoming, as He was, a Savior on Mount Zion.**

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\* In fact, even the presence or absence of the Ark of Covenant, as well as the Tabernacle which contained it, bore such a witness.