

Ir-ot-44
Every Thing Shall Live Whither the River Cometh
(Ezekiel 43-44; 47)
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(This lesson gives insights into Ezekiel's visions on the Temple. One of Ezekiel's three signs of the Restored Israel is Temples!* **It also includes a supportive true account**).

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

A. So, it is significant that in 586 B.C. King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon destroyed Solomon's Temple and finished taking its instruments and the Jews into captivity.

B. This destruction and their captivity was a final witness that the Lord's presence was withdrawn from ancient Israel at that time.

C. 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.**

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

E. Indeed, we will find that Zerubbabel re-builds a temple at that time. It is one of the first desires and responsibilities that they felt!

II. Ezekiel's vision foreshadows another future temple --- that in the Last Days.

A. This temple points to Latter-day temples, rebuilt after Israel is returned once more from bondage under a greater Babylon (the apostasy), and are again re-gathered as a people. (Remember that Herod's Temple was also destroyed, in 70 A.D., as a witness of Israel again being rejected by the Lord).

B. Thus in these, the Last Days, as Israel is being re-gathered for the last time, the Lord immediately commanded His church to build temples.

C. For *Temples are a major witness that here stands the true Israel, and that God's presence is once again among them.*

III. The Temple, while very important in itself, also bore witness of Jesus the Christ [and of His dwelling place], who would come to Israel after their first Babylonian captivity. Ezekiel's visions teach some additional truths about how the temple points to Christ.

A. The temple, as a representation of Jesus the Christ, shows by what standard of measurement we will be judged.

B. Ezekiel's description of the measuring of the temple is a witness of the virtues of Christ against which all men will be measured.

1. **"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).

2. Paul said something similar this way: "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).

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

A. After Jesus the Christ first came 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. Christ’s descending below the ground in death, and His ultimate resurrection, brought new life to all who die.

3. Furthermore, in the Millennium, because of Christ, all death will literally cease.

1. “And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death ...” (Rev. 21:4).

V. There is yet one more layer of meaning.

A. While there may be some way in which a future temple sends forth water to heal the Dead Sea, most of Ezekiel’s prophecies are symbolic, **and a greater reality is that from the Latter-day Temple will come Living Waters which will heal all the deceased!**

1. This prophecy is being fulfilled now. 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.

VI. Ezekiel provides other choice witnesses of Christ’s Millennial reign among us.

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 as His people, 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).

VII. The blessings of spiritual life given to the deceased is a choice blessing.

This is shown by Elder Tatenda Ndunduma of Zimbabwe, Africa, who as an orphan, was recently sealed to his deceased parents in the Accra, Ghana Temple.

“Tatenda’s arduous journey to the temple and the mission field began January 26, 1994 when he was born in Harare, Zimbabwe. When he was three years old and his brother was seven, his father became very ill. At the peak of his sickness, the father could not stand or eat, and could hardly breathe. His mother entered his hospital room and upon

viewing her husband in his weakened condition she collapsed to the floor and died. His father, because of his comatose condition, was not even aware that his wife died, and he died just two days later.

“Tatenda ... was then sent to live with his aunt (sister of his father) and his grandmother. Two years later his grandmother also passed away. His aunt took on part-time work to provide food and often her two children and Tatenda were left alone. None of the children knew how to cook for themselves.

“[When Tatenda was] 16 his sweet aunt died and so he was left to live with her husband and a son who was his age. Life was hard and Tatenda would often cry wishing that his parents were still alive. He had already buried 4 caregivers. He was eventually sent back to Harare, Zimbabwe, to live with another aunt and there he was finally able to be reunited with his brother who was 20 at the time.

“Tatenda now knows that this move to the capital city of Harare was also for a divine purpose. Simbarashe, the son of his aunt, was a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and invited him to attend some LDS church meetings. Tatenda was soon introduced to the Mormon missionaries and listened intently to the missionary lessons. However, it was not until he heard the lesson about the plan of salvation that he was completely converted to the restored gospel.

“It was the sweetest message he had ever heard in his young life and changed his tears of sorrow to tears of joy. **He had previously thought that he would never see his parents again, having never heard of life after death.** Feeling the Spirit of the Lord, he asked to be baptized on November 17, 2012. From that point on, he was a changed man. He knew that it was his responsibility to make certain that his parents were both baptized by proxy in the temple and sealed together as a forever family. Now that dream has become a reality.” (Related in “Missionary Moment,” *Meridian Magazine*, October 6, 2014.)

And these blessings all came because of Christ’s resurrection, and because of His Temples built for such blessings in these Latter days.

VIII. In summary, we see that Ezekiel’s vision of the temple prophesied many wonderful truths. 1. Christ’s coming in the Meridian of Time to bring life to the dead. 2. His virtues by which we will be measured. 3. His dwelling among the righteous in the Millennium where He would be the Ultimate Temple and the Ultimate Fountain of Living Waters which would bring life to all things. 4. Our Latter-day temples, where as we do work for the dead, beneath our temples, we are helping bring Eternal Life to the deceased.

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.

* The first two signs of the True Church, as learned earlier from Ezekiel are: (1) good shepherds who watch over their flocks, and (2) the presence of two records which testify of the Lord’s works and help scattered Israel to re-inherit their blessings.

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