

Message #46

Ezekiel 42:1-20

One of the things that we believers are looking forward to is the moment we go home to be with the Lord. One of the great promises Jesus made to the N.T. Grace Age believer is “in my father’s house are many dwelling places” and I will come back to take you to that place I have prepared. Now we take that literally. There is a specific place designed by Jesus Christ for every believer.

Now the idea that there are specific places designed for God’s people is seen right in the worship that takes place at the Temple that will exist during the millennium. No one is actually going to live permanently at this Temple, but human priests will minister there and there will be specifically designed rooms that are there for that purpose. So in any context of existence, God has designed places for His people, including His place of worship.

This temple is a very sacred place. This temple, when it is standing, will be the most holy place on the face of this earth. We have done our best to analyze the design of this, but frankly there are things here that we will have to wait to see.

What we do know is that when this temple is in existence, nothing that is profane will ever enter it. All of the people and all of the rooms that are here will be holy. That is clear from this text.

EZEKIEL IS GIVEN A DESCRIPTION OF THE PRIEST’S CHAMBERS AND THE FINAL MEASUREMENT OF THE TEMPLE WHICH CLEARLY COMMUNICATES THAT THERE IS TO BE A DISTINCT DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE SACRED AND THE SECULAR.

Now there is an interesting statement in Psalm 84:4 that says, “How blessed are those who dwell in Thy house! They are ever praising thee.” What that verse tells us is that when this Temple is standing in Jerusalem, there will be those who will actually dwell there for a time carrying out priestly responsibilities. There will be rooms for them to stay. They will not stay there permanently (**42:14**), because they will go out among the people. But this will be the most prestigious office or room that one could ever have as a Jew. To actually be able to stay in this place would be a tremendous honor.

This is the way the N.T. believer will view heaven. It will be an honor to be there. To actually go to heaven will be an amazing privilege of grace.

This breaks down into two main measurements:

MEASUREMENT #1 – The measurement of things pertaining to the priests. **42:1-14**

According to **verse 1**, Ezekiel left the Temple and was given a tour of some other chambers. Ezekiel’s guide led him northward through the north gate out of the Temple that brought him to the outer court and brought him to some rooms that were sitting opposite the temple courtyard and opposite the outer wall on the north side.

Now this north part of the Temple, in the inner court, apparently contains two rectangular blocks of the three story buildings. These rooms were used by the priests for eating sacrifices (**46:19-20**) and for closets to store their garments (**44:19**).

These rooms were apparently also on three tiers (**v. 3, 5**) and the upper rooms were more narrow and smaller than the rooms on the first two tiers. This is just the opposite of the other tiers that expand as it goes up (41:7); this narrows as it goes up.

According to **verse 2**, the row of rooms that were nearest the sanctuary was 100 cubits long and 50 cubits wide. So the rooms were 175 feet long and 87.5 feet wide.

Now according to **verse 3**, opposite the 20 cubit square Holy of Holies and opposite the pavement that belonged to the outer court is a three story gallery.

According to **verse 4**, there were two buildings on the north side with a corridor or inner walkway that was 10 cubits wide (17.5 feet wide).

Now from **verse 5**, we learn that the upper chambers were smaller because the galleries took more space than the lower and middle chambers. Dr. Ironside believes that these function as apartments for the priests.

From **verse 6** we learn that there were no pillars holding these tiers up so they were set back more than the lower and middle chambers. So these were designed like terraces with the upper balconies set farther back than those under them.

Apparently when one looks at it, it will appear as though one balcony is on top of another.

The outer wall by the side of the chambers was 50 cubits (87.5 feet) (**42:8**). The length of those facing the temple were 100 cubits (175 feet) (**v. 8**).

Below the chambers was the entrance on the east side (**v. 9**).

According to **verses 10-12**, an identical group of buildings and rooms also exist on the south side.

Now in **verses 13-14**, we learn the purpose of those rooms:

(Purpose #1) - The priests who are near the Lord will eat the most holy offerings in those rooms.
42:13; 46:20

According to the Mosaic Law, the priests were to receive a portion of the offerings (Lev. 2:3, 10; 6:16, 26-30; 7:7-10). During the Millennium, there will be a similar application of this.

(Purpose #2) - The priests will store their priestly garments in those rooms. **42:14; 44:19**

There are several observations we want to make about this:

(Observation #1) - The chambers are located in relation to the Temple itself.

This is a sacred place. God permits not only a place, but also people to be involved in sacred worship. No one can worship God their own way on their own wherever they want.

(Observation #2) - The chambers are described as being holy.

These chambers where these leaders congregate are holy, set apart places.

(Observation #3) - The chambers are reserved for the highest order of priests.

They have direct access to Jehovah (**v. 13**).

(Observation #4) - The chambers represent the place where the most sacred of offerings may be consumed (**v. 13**).

The offerings will be eaten by the priests. More than one commentator has pointed out that when people go to church, they should go with a hunger to be fed God's Word. They should go with an appetite desiring to feed on the Word of God. The church has a responsibility to see to it that when the sheep come to worship, they are fed a good, solid meal.

(Observation #5) - The chambers provide a storage place for the most sacred gifts:
grain offering; sin offering; Guilt offering.

(Observation #6) - The chambers provide a place to store priestly garments when the priests are not performing their duties.

MEASUREMENT #2 – The final measurement of the Temple. **42:15-20**

Now after the angel measured everything within the Temple, according to **verses 15-20**, he led Ezekiel outside to record the concluding external dimensions of the temple.

The temple complex was 500 cubits on each side east, north, south and west. Six times in these verses the number “500 reeds” is mentioned (**v. 16, 17, 18, 19, 20 (2x)**).

Now the Hebrew reads 500 reeds and the Septuagint translates it to 500 cubits, which corresponds to the rest of the text.

The 500 cubits is 10,500 square inches which is 875 feet square or 291.6 square yards.

Now 875 square feet by 875 square feet is 765,625 square feet. To put this in some perspective we can compare it to a football field.

On a football field that is 120 by 53.3 yards, the total square feet is 57,600. What this means is that this Temple complex is more than the square footage of 13 football fields.

Carefully look at **verse 20**, the purpose of these walls are not to keep enemies out. The purpose of these walls is to protect the sanctity of God. This is a holy and sacred place that will feature the very presence of God and nothing profane will ever enter it.

No matter how good things appear outside these walls, compared to God's righteousness, it is profane.

According to Ezekiel 44:23, the responsibility of the priests will be to teach the people the difference between the sacred and profane. By this teaching, they will be able to discern the unclean and the clean.

Now this Temple and these rooms have been prepared for the arrival of a Divine Person.

Four parting thoughts:

1) Every bit of this Temple area is carefully measured and has a purpose, which forces us to admit this will be a literal place.

I cannot imagine Ezekiel writing down all of these measurements and then going to the people of Israel and saying this isn't real; it is just all symbolism that I am giving to you because God and myself have nothing better to do. This will be a very real sacred place of worship when Jesus Christ reigns on this earth.

2) There are different levels of sanctity.

At the center of this is the most sacred spot of all, which is the Holy of Holies. Then outside of that there are areas where the priests who are close to God may be. Then you have another area of other priests around the altar and within the inner gates.

Then there is the outer area open to worshippers. Then out beyond that there is the surrounding territory of Israel that is recognized by the rest of the world as being a sacred land.

3) God has a wonderful, future plan for Israel.

Israel needs to realize this. God has a tremendous plan of future blessing for Israel. In any plan of God for the people of God, He has a wonderful future plan that literally will be fulfilled.

4) It is a privilege to have a relationship with God in any dispensation.

Any relationship with God is of pure grace.