

Brief on Ezechiel’s Vision of the Second Temple, Jerusalem, and Israel¹

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¹ RJMI’s Briefs are Long Commentaries contained in the end of *The Catholic Bible*, revised by RJMI.

The vision

Before the first temple fell, the Prophet Ezechiel was taken into the Babylonian Captivity with King Joachin. He was contemporary with Jeremias and prophesied to the same effect in Babylon as Jeremias did in Jerusalem. While he was in Babylon, the first temple was destroyed by the Babylonians.

In the 14th year after the temple was destroyed, God gave Ezechiel a vision of what the second temple, Jerusalem, and Israel should look like when the temple will be rebuilt and Jerusalem and Israel re-occupied after the Israelites return from their 70-year captivity in Babylon:

“In the five and twentieth year of our captivity, in the beginning of the year, the tenth day of the month, the fourteenth year after the city was destroyed: in the selfsame day the hand of the Lord was upon me, and he brought me thither. In the visions of God he brought me into the land of Israel, and set me upon a very high mountain: upon which there was as the building of a city, bending towards the south.” (Ez. 40:1-2)

This vision was meant not only to let the Israelites know God’s plans for the second temple, Jerusalem, and Israel but to remind them that God had not abandoned them and that he will restore them to the Promised Land and they will rebuild the Temple.

Ezechiel’s vision of the second temple, Jerusalem, and Israel is recorded in Ezechiel, Chapters 40 to 48.

The second temple was meant to be more glorious than the first

The plans for the second temple were grander than the first temple because God himself, Jesus Christ, the Messiah, will come into the second temple. Indeed, regarding the second temple and Jerusalem in those days, Ezechiel says,

“And the name of the city [Jerusalem] from that day [shall be called], The Lord is there.” (Ez. 48:35)

And the Prophet Malachias also foretold that God will come into the second temple:

“Behold I send my messenger [John the Baptist], and he shall prepare the way before my face. And presently the Lord [Jesus Christ] whom you seek, and the messenger of the testament whom you desire, shall come to his temple [the second temple]. Behold he cometh, saith the Lord of hosts.” (Mala. 3:1)

On his return from the Babylonian Exile, the Prophet Aggeus oversaw the building of the second temple and exhorted Zorobabel, the prince of Juda, and Jesus, the high priest, to build the temple. God, speaking through the Prophet Aggeus, said that the Messiah, God the Son, will dwell in the second temple and that it will be more glorious than the first temple:

“For thus saith the Lord of hosts: Yet one little while, and I will move the heaven and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land. And I will move all nations: AND THE DESIRED OF ALL NATIONS SHALL COME [Jesus Christ]: and I will fill this house with glory [the second temple]: saith the Lord of hosts. The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, saith the Lord of hosts. Great shall be the glory of this last house more than of the first, saith the Lord of hosts: and in this place I will give peace, saith the Lord of hosts.” (Agge. 2:7-10)

The second temple was meant to be more glorious than the first not only physically but also, and more importantly, spiritually. Indeed, it was more glorious spiritually because the Messiah, who is not only man but also God, came into it and brought redemption to the world. The first

time God came into the second temple as an inhabitant and dweller in Israel was when the infant Jesus was presented in the temple:

“And after eight days were accomplished, that the child should be circumcised, his name was called JESUS, which was called by the angel, before he was conceived in the womb. And after the days of her purification, according to the law of Moses, were accomplished, they carried him to Jerusalem, to present him to the Lord: As it is written in the law of the Lord: Every male opening the womb shall be called holy to the Lord: And to offer a sacrifice, according as it is written in the law of the Lord, a pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons: And behold there was a man in Jerusalem named Simeon, and this man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel; and the Holy Spirit was in him. And he had received an answer from the Holy Spirit, that he should not see death, before he had seen the Christ of the Lord. And he came by the Spirit into the temple. And when his parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him according to the custom of the law, He also took him into his arms, and blessed God, and said: Now thou dost dismiss thy servant, O Lord, according to thy word in peace; Because my eyes have seen thy salvation, Which thou hast prepared before the face of all peoples: A light to the revelation of the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel.” (Lk. 2:21-32)

Hence, the second temple was more glorious spiritually than the first because God came into it and redeemed men while it was standing. However, it was not more glorious physically, as God wanted it to be, because the Israelites did not fulfill God’s plans for the second temple as given to Ezechiel:

Catholic Commentary of Agge. 2:10: “Great shall be the glory of this house: The ancients who had seen the former [the first temple] wept when that of Zorobabel was founded [the second temple], confessing its inferiority both in size and elegance. It was only 60 cubits high and broad, while the former was 120, built of polished stone and covered with cedar. Zorobabel had rough stones (1 Esd. 5:8), (1 Esd. 6:3), (2 Par. 3:4), and (3 Ki. 6:7). As for the same temple [the second temple], enlarged and adorned by Herod, it continued not long in that state; and its chief glory consisted of our Saviour’s presence, when he was received in the arms of Simeon, and often preached there.”

When given the vision, Ezechiel warned the Israelites to follow God’s plan:

“But thou, son of man, shew to the house of Israel the temple, and let them be ashamed of their iniquities, and let them measure the building: And be ashamed of all that they have done. Shew them the form of the house, and of the fashion thereof, the goings out and the comings in, and the whole plan thereof, and all its ordinances, and all its order, and all its laws, and thou shalt write it in their sight: that they may keep the whole form thereof and its ordinances and do them.” (Ez. 43:10-11)

The fact that the Israelites did not “keep the whole form thereof and its ordinances and do them” showed a lack of faith on their part and was a foreboding of their future lack of faith which caused them to reject and crucify Christ, which in turn caused the destruction of the second temple, which was meant to last forever.

The second temple, as well as the first, was meant to last forever

If the Israelites had followed God’s plan for the second temple, Jerusalem, and Israel, as given to Ezechiel, and remained faithful to God, then the second temple would never have been destroyed and would have remained forever; that is, at least until the end of this world:

“And I heard one speaking to me out of the house [the vision of the second temple], and the man that stood by me, Said to me: Son of man, the place of my throne, and the place of the soles of my feet, where I dwell in the midst of the children of Israel forever: and the house of Israel shall no more profane my holy name, they and their kings by their fornications, and by the carcasses of their kings, and by the high places... Now therefore let them put away their fornications, and the carcasses of their kings far from me: and I will dwell in the midst of them forever.” (Ez. 43:6-7, 9)

Hence God’s promise that the second temple would last forever was a conditional promise predicated upon the Israelites’ faithfulness and obedience to God “to put away their fornications.” The fact that they did not build the second temple according to God’s plan was a sure sign of their lack of faith and obedience to God, which came to the pinnacle when they rejected and crucified Jesus Christ.² The following is a quote from an apostate Jew who correctly believes that the second temple was supposed to have been built according to God’s plan given to Ezechiel but was not because of the sins of the Israelites:

Did the Jews Disregard Ezekiel’s Prophecy of the Temple? By Yehuda Shurpin, 2020:

“Dear Rabbi,

“I read, with great interest, chapters 40-48 of Ezekiel in the Bible. Is it true that the Jews never built the Temple that is described there?

“If it is true, why did the Jews disregard Ezekiel’s prophecy when they built the second Temple? And why was it relevant for the prophet to describe, in great detail, something that they didn’t even end up building?

“Answer:

“It was in the twenty-fifth year of the Babylonian exile that Ezekiel prophesied that the Holy Temple would be rebuilt. The prophecy spans a number of chapters, describing in great detail how this future Temple would look. And yet, when we look at the descriptions of the second Temple, we see that it was not built according to those specifications.

“The famed commentator, Rabbi Sholomo Yitzchaki (Rashi), quotes from the sages to explain these verses:

“The second ascent to the Holy Land of Israel during the time of Ezra was meant to be like the first entry through Joshua—to come about by force and through a miracle. This is what the Talmud states, bringing proof from the verse where it states twice [the words] “cross over,” “Your people cross over, O G-d, until this nation that You have acquired crosses over.””

“This building would have been fit for them then, when they emerged from exile, had there been an everlasting redemption. However, their sin caused this to not happen; for their repentance was not suitable. In other words, they did not resolve to stop sinning. Therefore, they were freed only through the sanction of Cyrus and his son.

² It was God’s will, God’s plan, that the Israelites follow and obey all of his commandments and thus would receive abundant blessings. But if they did follow God’s plan, they would receive curses: “A blessing, if you obey the commandments of the Lord your God, which I command you this day: A curse, if you obey not the commandments of the Lord your God, but revolt from the way which now I shew you, and walk after strange gods which you know not.” (Deut. 11:27-28) It was God’s plan that the Israelites enter the Promised Land by warfare. But they cowed and thus did not follow and obey God’s plan. Hence God cursed them with a 40 year exile in the desert before they can again attempt to enter the Promised Land. (Num. 13) However, not all of God’s promises and covenants are conditional, some are absolute, such as the first and second coming of the Messiah, Jesus Christ. (See *RJMI Topic Index: Conditional promises and covenants.*)

“Some say that their sin in Babylon was that they stumbled regarding gentile women.

“This, explain the commentators, is the reason why they did not build the second Temple according to the specifications in the prophecy in Ezekiel. That Temple was to be an everlasting edifice, as the verse there states, ‘and I shall dwell among them forever.’ Instead, when it came time to rebuild the second Temple, G-d commanded through his prophets Chaggai, Zechariah and Malachi not to build it according to the specifications in Ezekiel.

“Indeed, when the Rabbis referred to the second Temple period, they would say it was a partial redemption only.³...

“Rabbi Yehuda Shurpin

“Ask the Rabbi @ The Judaism Website – Chabad.org”

Rabbi Shurpin prophesied without knowing exactly what it means. Partial redemption was had when the second temple was standing when Jesus died on the Holy Cross. Jesus’ death redeemed both souls and bodies but at first only souls benefit. Not until Jesus’ second coming will bodies also benefit from the redemption. St. Paul says, “Even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption of the sons of God, the redemption of our body.” (Rom. 8:23)

It was also God’s plan that the first temple would not be destroyed and thus remain, at least until the end of the world, if the Israelites remained faithful. But they did not, and thus the first temple was destroyed:

“And the Lord appeared to him [King Solomon] by night, and said: I have heard thy prayer, and I have chosen this place [the first temple] to myself for a house of sacrifice... For I have chosen and have sanctified this place that my name may be there for ever and my eyes and my heart may remain there perpetually. And as for thee, if thou walk before me, as David thy father walked, and do according to all that I have commanded thee, and keep my justices and my judgments: I will raise up the throne of thy kingdom, as I promised to David thy father, saying: There shall not fail thee a man of thy stock to be ruler in Israel. But if you turn away, and forsake my justices, and my commandments which I have set before you, and shall go and serve strange gods, and adore them, I will pluck you up by the root out of my land which I have given you: and this house which I have sanctified to my name, I will cast away from before my face, and will make it a byword, and an example among all nations. And this house shall be for a proverb to all that pass by, and they shall be astonished and say: Why hath the Lord done thus to this land, and to this house? And they shall answer: Because they forsook the Lord the God of their fathers, who brought them out of the land of Egypt, and laid hold on strange gods, and adored them, and worshipped them: therefore all these evils are come upon them.” (2 Par. 7:12-22)

That the second temple and the Jerusalem in which it stood was also meant to last forever and thus not be destroyed is proved when Jesus said the following:

“And when he drew near, seeing the city [Jerusalem], he [Jesus] wept over it, saying: If thou also hadst known, and that in this thy day, the things that are to thy peace; but now they are hidden from thy eyes. For the days shall come upon thee, and thy enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and straiten thee on every side, And beat thee flat to the ground, and thy children who are in

³ Here the Rabbi prophesied without knowing exactly what it means. Partial redemption was had when the second temple was standing. Jesus’ death redeemed both souls and bodies but at first only benefits souls. Not until Jesus’ second coming will bodies benefit from the redemption. St. Paul says, “Even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption of the sons of God, the redemption of our body.” (Rom. 8:23)

thee: and they shall not leave in thee a stone upon a stone: because thou hast not known the time of thy visitation.” (Lk. 19:41-44)

Hence if Jerusalem had known the “time of [its] visitation,” it would have known “peace” instead of being destroyed. Indeed, if enough Israelites would have remained faithful, the second temple would have remained forever; that is, at least until the end of this world.

One may ask, “How then would men be redeemed and thus have a hope to be saved if the bulk of the Israelites remained faithful and thus did not condemn and crucify Jesus? There are two solutions:

1) The most probable opinion (and most probably God’s first plan for his Son Jesus to die to redeem men) is that the faithful Israelites would have offered Jesus as a sacrifice to God the Father out of love and obedience to God, just as Abraham was prepared to offer up his beloved son Isaac as a sacrifice to God.

“After these things, God tried Abraham, and said to him: Abraham, Abraham. And he answered: Here I am. He said to him: Take thy beloved son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and go into the land of vision: and there thou shalt offer him for an holocaust upon one of the mountains which I will shew thee... And they came to the place which God had shewn him, where he built an altar, and laid the wood in order upon it: and when he had bound Isaac his son, he laid him on the altar upon the pile of wood. And he put forth his hand and took the sword, to sacrifice his son. And behold an angel of the Lord from heaven called to him, saying: Abraham, Abraham. And he answered: Here I am. And he said to him: Lay not thy hand upon the boy, neither do thou any thing to him: now I know that thou fearest God, and hast not spared thy only begotten son for my sake.” (Gen. 22:1-2, 9-12)

And the Paschal Lamb, which was a symbol and figure of Christ, was killed and offered up to God by faithful Israelites during Passover:

“Speak ye to the whole assembly of the children of Israel, and say to them: On the tenth day of this month let every man take a lamb by their families and houses... And you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of this month. And the whole multitude of the children of Israel shall sacrifice it in the evening. And they shall take of the blood thereof, and put it upon both the side posts, and on the upper door posts of the houses, wherein they shall eat it... And the blood shall be unto you for a sign in the houses where you shall be: and I shall see the blood, and shall pass over you: and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I shall strike the land of Egypt.” (Ex. 12:3, 6-7, 13)

Hence the faithful Israelites’ killing of Jesus (the ultimate Paschal Lamb) would not have been murder but a holy sacrifice offered to God the Father and thus an act of supreme love and faithfulness to God the Father, as well as to God the Son, Jesus Christ. Therefore, Jesus death would not have been attended with mocks, insults, and torture but in the manner that animals were offered to God were killed.

Because the Christ-denying Jews murdered Christ instead it can be said of them that they offered up Christ as a sacrifice to the Father unwillingly and ignorantly: “And if he do good, he doth it ignorantly, and unwillingly.” (Eccus. 14:7) Hence God can bring good even out of evil motives.

2) The less probable opinion is that the Romans or some other Gentile race would have been the ones who would have been the adamant enemies of Jesus and hence would have condemned and crucified him against the will of the bulk of the Israelites. But God would have given the Israelites enough power so that the Romans or other Gentile race would not be able to destroy the second temple nor kill many of the Israelites, nor take them into exile.

Because God is all knowing and thus knows all things before they come to pass, he knew the Jews would not build the second temple as he commanded and knew that the Jews would condemn and crucify Jesus Christ. And hence the prophets prophesied as much. But God also allowed the record to show what would have happened had they obeyed him regarding this or that. For example,

“If then you obey my commandments, which I command you this day, that you love the Lord your God, and serve him with all your heart, and with all your soul, he will give to your land the early rain and the latter rain, that you may gather in your corn and your wine, and your oil, And your hay out of the fields to feed your cattle, and that you may eat and be filled. Beware lest perhaps your heart be deceived, and you depart from the Lord, and serve strange gods, and adore them: And the Lord being angry shut up heaven, that the rain come not down, nor the earth yield her fruit, and you perish quickly from the excellent land, which the Lord will give you... A blessing, if you obey the commandments of the Lord your God, which I command you this day: A curse, if you obey not the commandments of the Lord your God but revolt from the way which now I shew you, and walk after strange gods which you know not.” (Deut. 11:13-17, 27-28)

Not only spiritual but also physical water was meant to come from the second temple

If God’s plans had been fulfilled for the second temple, Jerusalem, and Israel, physical water would have flowed from a well below the temple, as recorded in Ezechiel, Chapter 47. From there, it would have flowed to the east side of the Temple into Kidron Valley and filled the valley southward to Engaddi into the Dead Sea and northward to Engallim into the Dead Sea. And the Dead Sea would have been healed and thus would have contained many fish. And it would have watered trees and other vegetation that would bear fruit all year, the 12 months of the year:

“And he brought me again to the gate of the house, and behold waters issued out from under the threshold of the house toward the east: for the forefront, of the house looked toward the east: but the waters came down to the right side of the temple to the south part of the altar. And he led me out by the way of the north gate, and he caused me to turn to the way without the outward gate to the way that looked toward the east: and behold there ran out waters on the right side. And when the man that had the line in his hand went out towards the east, he measured a thousand cubits: and he brought me through the water up to the ankles. And again he measured a thousand, and he brought me through the water up to the knees. And he measured a thousand, and he brought me through the water up to the loins. And he measured a thousand, and it was a torrent, which I could not pass over: for the waters were risen so as to make a deep torrent, which could not be passed over. And he said to me: Surely thou hast seen, O son of man. And he brought me out, and he caused me to turn to the bank of the torrent. And when I had turned myself, behold on the bank of the torrent were very many trees on both sides. And he said to me: These waters that issue forth toward the hillocks of sand to the east, and go down to the plains of the desert, shall go into the sea, and shall go out, and the waters shall be healed. And every living creature that creepeth whithersoever the torrent shall come, shall live: and there shall be fishes in abundance after these waters shall come thither, and they shall be healed, and all things shall live to which the torrent shall come. And the fishers shall stand over these waters, from Engaddi even to Engallim there shall be drying of nets: there shall be many sorts of the fishes thereof, as the fishes of the great sea, a very great multitude: But on the shore thereof, and in the fenny places they shall not be healed, because they shall be turned into saltpits. And by the torrent on the banks thereof on both sides shall grow all trees that bear fruit: their leaf shall not fall off, and their fruit shall not fail: every month shall they bring

forth firstfruits, because the waters thereof shall issue out of the sanctuary: and the fruits thereof shall be for food, and the leaves thereof for medicine.” (Ez. 47:1-12)

These are some of the temporal blessing the Israelites would have had if most of the Israelites were faithful and obedient to God, which would have been proved if they had followed God’s plans as given to Ezechiel.

One proof that the trees and other vegetation that would have been watered by water that flowed from the Temple would have bore fruit all year and thus out of their normal season is when Jesus cursed the fig tree for not bearing fruit out of season:

“And the next day when they came out from Bethania, he was hungry. And when he had seen afar off a fig tree having leaves, he came if perhaps he might find anything on it. And when he was come to it, he found nothing but leaves. For it was not the time for figs. And answering he said to it: May no man hereafter eat fruit of thee any more forever. And his disciples heard it.” (Mk. 11:12-14)

Jesus was telling the Israelites that if they had followed God’s plan for the second temple, this fig tree would have bore fruit because it would have bore fruit all year. Indeed, if enough Israelites were faithful and thus followed God’s plans for the second temple, this fig tree would have been watered by the water that would have flowed from the temple and bore fruit all year. The curse of this fig tree is the curse that fell upon the unfaithful Jews when they did not follow God’s plan for the second temple, Jerusalem, and Israel, which was bore out when they denied and crucified Jesus Christ, for they did not know what season it was, the season of the Messiah, the season of redemption.

“And he said also to the multitudes: When you see a cloud rising from the west, presently you say: A shower is coming: and so it happeneth: And when ye see the south wind blow, you say: There will be heat: and it cometh to pass. You hypocrites, you know how to discern the face of the heaven and of the earth: but how is it that you do not discern this time?” (Lk. 12:54-56)

Even though physical water did not flow from the second temple, spiritual water did flow from Jerusalem and watered the whole world when the second temple was standing. This spiritual water is sanctifying grace that Christ made available by his death on the Holy Cross. And this spiritual water was symbolized when Christ’s right side was pierced with a lance in which not only blood but also water flowed from his side:

“And behold there ran out waters on the right side.” (Ez. 47:2)

“But after they were come to Jesus, when they saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. But one of the soldiers with a spear opened his side and immediately there came out blood and water.” (Jn. 19:33-34)

The physical water that flowed from Jesus’ side is symbolic of sanctifying grace, which is spiritual water for souls. It gives everlasting life to men by making them worthy of entering heaven by remitting their sins and the punishment due to their sins. And this spiritual water flowed from Jerusalem from the side of Christ into the whole world and gives life all year to those who are baptized into the Catholic Church and to the faithful who are guilty of sin when they receive the sacrament of penance by sincerely confessing their sins to a Catholic priest. Hence the fishes watered by sanctifying grace represent Catholics. Jesus said to his apostles, “I will make you to be fishers of men.” (Mt. 4:18-19)

“And the fishers shall stand over these waters [meant to flow from the second temple], from Engaddi even to Engallim there shall be drying of nets: there shall be many sorts of the fishes thereof, as the fishes of the great sea, a very great multitude.” (Ez. 47:10)

Hence Ezechieel's vision of water flowing from the second temple in Jerusalem was meant to be literal and spiritual but was only fulfilled spiritually.

And the physical water that was meant to flow from the second temple will flow from the throne of Christ the King in the New Jerusalem and water the earth and make it bear fruit all year, as recorded by St. John and Apocalypse, Chapters 22 and 23:

“And I saw a new heaven and a new earth. For the first heaven and the first earth was gone, and the sea is now no more. And I John saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice from the throne, saying: Behold the tabernacle of God with men, and he will dwell with them. And they shall be his people; and God himself with them shall be their God... And he that sat on the throne, said: Behold, I make all things new. And he said to me: Write, for these words are most faithful and true.” (Apoc. 21:1-3, 5)

“And he shewed me a river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street thereof, and on both sides of the river, was the tree of life, bearing twelve fruits, yielding its fruits every month, and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. And there shall be no curse any more; but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and his servants shall serve him.” (Apoc. 22:1-3)

And this water, too, is not only literal water that gives physical life to fruits and other foods for the enjoyment of the elect but also spiritual water that gives spiritual life to the elect. This spiritual water is graces that flow from Christ the King for the benefit of the souls and glorified bodies of the elect. It gives their souls spiritual life by maintaining them in a state of grace and giving their souls joy, happiness, and all other good spiritual things. And it gives their glorified bodies physical life by maintaining their bodies in a state of purity, health, and vigor and by giving their bodies other good physical things.

The twelve tribes of Israel were meant to be given portions of land in Israel

If God's plans had been fulfilled for the second temple, Jerusalem, and Israel, the twelve tribes would have been allotted land in Israel and occupied it according to Ezechieel vision, as mentioned in Chapters 47 and 48:

“Thus saith the Lord God: This is the border, by which you shall possess the land according to the twelve tribes of Israel... And you shall divide this land unto you by the tribes of Israel:” (Ez. 47:13, 21)

Chapter 48 gives the details of the portions that each tribe was to possess and occupy. This is what would have happened if most of the Israelites were faithful and obedient to God, which would have been proved if they had followed God's plans as given to Ezechieel. But they were not! Hence this apportionment of land and the occupying of it by most of the tribes did not occur.

If they did follow God's plan, then many of the members of the ten tribes of the once Northern Kingdom of Israel that were taken into captivity by Assyrians would have returned to occupy the land allotted to them and thus would not have lost their tribal identity down until today, as only a few of the members of these tribes kept their tribal identity down until today.⁴

However, in the new earth and the new Israel, which Jesus will create during his second coming, the members of the twelve tribes who are saved will then have their allotted land in the

⁴ See *RJMI Topic Index: Lost Tribes of Israel*.

New Israel and occupy it forever.⁵ That is when God's promise to Abraham and faithful Israelites will finally be accomplished:

“And the Lord said to Abram after Lot was separated from him: Lift up thy eyes, and look from the place wherein thou now art, to the north and to the south, to the east and to the west. All the land which thou seest, I will give to thee and to thy seed forever.” (Gen. 13:14-15)

“And I will bring back the captivity of my people Israel, and they shall build the abandoned cities and inhabit them. And they shall plant vineyards and drink the wine of them and shall make gardens and eat the fruits of them. And I will plant them upon their own land, and I will no more pluck them out of their land which I have given them, saith the Lord thy God.” (Amos 9:14)

The area of the temple, Jerusalem, and tribal land in Ezechiel's vision

The specifications for the sanctuary (the area of the temple) and of the city of Jerusalem, according to the vision of Ezechiel, is 500 square cubits (.16 sq. miles) for the sanctuary and 5000 square cubits (1.6 sq. miles) for Jerusalem. And the specifications for the land allotted to each tribe were also given to Ezechiel, even though it never came to pass.

The Jerome Biblical Commentary, 1999: “100 (b) Portions for Each Tribe (48:1-29). Each tribe in turn is given a strip of land that reaches from the coast to the E border, so that all territories are equal in size. Seven are fitted N of the special section reserved for the Temple, priests, Levites, and prince. Five are fitted below this portion. 7. Judah is placed closest to the special holy section on the N side, while Benjamin is placed closest on the S. These are the sons of the favorite wife of Jacob, Rachel. But their place in Ezekiel's scheme reverses their real geographical position, in which Judah was just below Benjamin.

“Verses 8-22 treat of the dimensions and borders of the portions reserved for the priests, Levites, and prince. See comment on 43:1-7. 17. *open land*: With this common space, the total dimensions of the city come to 5,000 cubits on a side, precisely 10 times the Temple square [500 cubits].”⁶

Against the error that Ezechiel's vision was only symbolic or spiritual

Beware of the error that Ezechiel's vision was only spiritual or symbolic and thus not literal. Ezechiel's visions was mostly literal but in parts it is literal and spiritual (such as the water that was meant to flow from the second temple (Ez. 47))⁷ and in other parts it is literal and symbolic (such as the Eastern Gate of the temple which is symbolic of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Incarnation, and Mary's ever virginity (Ez. 44:1-3)). Hence while some parts of Ezechiel's vision are spiritual and symbolic, they are also literal and thus are both literal and spiritual or literal and symbolic, just as the Paschal Lamb offered by the Israelites was literal and symbolic. It was a literal lamb sacrificed and symbolic of Christ, the ultimate Paschal Lamb.

Those who hold the error that Ezechiel's vision is not literal but only spiritual and symbolic do not consider that this plan for the temple was God's literal plan for the second temple, even though the Israelites did not fulfill God's plan.

⁵ See RJMI book *The Everlasting Earthly Paradise and the Errors of Millennialism* and *RJMI Topic Index: Everlasting Earthly Paradise*.

⁶ Edited and Nihil Obstat by Raymond E. Brown, S.S., Joseph A. Fitzmyer, S.J., Roland E. Murphy, O. Carm. Imprimatur by Reverend William J. Kane, Vicar General of the Archdiocese of Washington, November 15, 1988. Forward by Cardinal Carlo Maria Martini, S.J. Published by Prentice Hall, Inc., Upper Saddle River, NJ, 1990. Ezekiel (47:13-48:35), [20:100-101], p. 328.

⁷ See in this book “Not only spiritual but also physical water was meant to come from the second temple,” p. 7.

Because they do not consider this, their only other solution for those who hold the dogma that since the New Covenant and the fall of the second temple there can no longer be a temple in which there will be a legal and valid Levitical Priesthood and animal sacrifices is that Ezechieel's vision was only symbolic and spiritual and thus not literal. While this error is not heretical, it is greatly scandalous and undermines the very basics of Biblical interpretation. Anyone with common sense can know that Ezechieel's vision was literal (even though parts are literal and spiritual and other parts literal and symbolic). His specifications are so numerous and detailed regarding the temple and its surroundings, the Levitical Priesthood, and the animal sacrifices that it is impossible to explain them all in only a spiritual or symbolic way and thus believe that none of it was meant to be literal. It would have been better for those who hold this non-heretical error to simply say they do not know the meaning Ezechieel's vision and leave it at that.

However, the problem for those who correctly believe that the plan for the temple is literal but incorrectly believe it will be the third temple is heresy. It is heresy because the Old Covenant Levitical Priesthood and rituals have ended and are not only dead but also deadly. Hence to believe correctly that the temple specifications and all that pertains to it are literal but to heretically believe it will be the third temple is a denial of Jesus Christ and the New Covenant because the temple, as described by Ezechieel, will have a Levitical Priesthood and animal sacrifices.

For the glory of God; in honor of the Blessed Virgin Mary, St. Michael, St. Joseph, Ss. Joachim and Anne, St. John the Baptist, the other angels and saints; and for the salvation of men

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Mary's Little Remnant

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