

Hello everyone,

PERCENT OF BIBLE COMPLETED: 64.0%

Weekly Readings will cover:

Sunday: Daniel 4

Monday: Ezekiel 40

Tuesday: Ezekiel 41

Wednesday: Ezekiel 42 & Ezekiel 43

Thursday: Ezekiel 44 & Ezekiel 45

Friday: Ezekiel 46

Saturday: Ezekiel 47 & Ezekiel 48

Current # of email addresses in the group: 627

A very happy Sabbath and Pentecost weekend to each of you.

What a gift each of you are! I so appreciate your enthusiasm and devotion to studying God's Word each week. This has not been an easy program. It takes tremendous dedication for each of you. Thank you for sharing your zeal with me along the way.

I also thank those of you, like my Brother in Christ, Giovanni in Italy, and others who translate this into other languages so even more can study with us. Your dedication is amazing to me!

I received a number of emails this week. The last several weeks have been extremely busy, full of visits, counseling's, sermon prep, etc...and I simply haven't found any extra time to get back to most of the emails. I apologize and will do my best to. If you haven't received a response and you are getting anxious, please re-send and I'll try to get to it next week.

I can't believe we are already to the month of June. Time keeps moving quickly toward the return of Jesus Christ.

I hope this week's reading is enjoyable to each of you.

Current and archive of this reading program is available at:

<https://www.ucg.org/congregations/san-francisco-bay-area-ca/announcements/audio-links-re-three-year-chronological-deep>

The audio archive information is also available on our UCG Bay Area YouTube page here:

https://youtube.com/@ucgbayarea5792?si=EA_tacLBfv1XR3jH

You may actually prefer accessing it directly from this Playlist tab:

<https://www.youtube.com/@ucgbayarea5792/playlists>

3-YEAR CHRONOLOGICAL STUDY: Week 98

Read the following passages & the Daily Deep Dive on the daily reading.

Day 659 – SUNDAY: June 1st

Daniel 4

Daily Deep Dive:

The UCG reading plan states: “Chapter 4 of Daniel is a most remarkable section of the Bible in that much of it consists of Nebuchadnezzar's own words. Some historians have questioned the authorship, claiming that there is nothing else in Babylonian records to confirm such an incident. They also dispute the king having used such words, as they would have been unacceptable to the Babylonian people who worshiped him as a god. Some who dispute the authorship claim that Daniel probably wrote it. Yet while Daniel could have drafted the declaration just as speechwriters do for today's leaders, the Bible specifically states that it was the word of Nebuchadnezzar.

The declaration comes at the end of an eight-year episode—the dream with its interpretation (verses 4-27), a year of delay or probation (verses 28-29) and the seven-"time" (i.e., seven-year) affliction (verses 25, 30-37; compare [Daniel 7:25](#), where a "time" equals a year, as we will later examine). "The story is set in a time of relative peace after Nebuchadnezzar's major conquests and massive building projects. It best fits after the fall of Jerusalem, during the lengthy siege of Tyre when Babylon launched no other major military operation. Not unexpectedly no record of a lengthy madness has been found in the royal archives, but it could have occurred any time between 582 and 573 B.C." (Lawrence Richards, *The Bible Reader's Companion*, 1991, note on verse 4). This would put Nebuchadnezzar's second dream about 23-24 years from the time of Daniel's captivity in 605 B.C.

The prophet has been serving in a high capacity in the empire for more than two decades. At the beginning of that period the king had the

miraculous experience of his first dream and its interpretation. More recently, he witnessed the amazing episode of Daniel's three friends in the fiery furnace. And yet Nebuchadnezzar, while recognizing the Hebrew God as a powerful deity, does not recognize Him as the true and only God. He says Daniel is called Belteshazzar "according to the name of my god" (verse 8)—his god being Bel-Marduk. And where the NKJV has "Spirit of the Holy God," it is better rendered "spirit of the holy gods." Nebuchadnezzar saw that "in contrast to the other soothsayers in his court, Daniel was truly inspired by God (or the gods): 'The spirit of the holy gods is in him.' (That this *elahin*, {'gods'}) is meant as a true plural—rather than a plural of majesty—is shown by the plural form of the adjective *qaddisin* accompanying it.)" (*Expositor's Bible Commentary*, note on verse 8). It should be noted that such language in the declaration does not necessarily mean that the king still thought in these terms after the whole affair was concluded. It may be that he was simply describing the way he understood things at the time of his dream—and that Bel *had been* his god. (Yet it could also be that he merely came to see and acknowledge the God of Israel as the "Most High" while still believing in and even worshiping lesser gods.)

The dream starts with a huge tree that grows to reach the ends of the earth. The magicians and others either can't or won't interpret the dream. Perhaps they can—the symbolism not being unique—but they are fearful of being the bearers of bad news to the king. So the king calls on the prophet of God. Yet "interpreting the dream was no easy assignment for Daniel. He well knew what the dream meant but could hardly bring himself to reveal it to Nebuchadnezzar. Daniel's loyalty to him—whom he had served so long and well and who had always shown Daniel kindness, even when Judah was being deported from her land of promise—was genuine. His sympathy for Nebuchadnezzar caused Daniel to shrink from announcing the king's coming degradation. It was a while before he could bring himself to speak (the Aramaic literally says, 'He was stupified for one hour'—but the word for 'hour' {*saah*})

does not necessarily mean anything more definite than 'a time'). At the king's insistence, however, Daniel finally began to speak" (*Expositor's*, note on verse 19a).

Daniel explains that the tree is Nebuchadnezzar, who will be figuratively cut down to live like a wild animal for seven "times" or years unless he repents. While Nebuchadnezzar has provided food, shelter and comfort for his empire, like many dictators his sins include oppression of his people (verse 27). The Bible doesn't make clear why there was a delay, but it is another year before he loses his sanity (see verse 29). Perhaps this was to allow the king time to repent prior to the punishment. Whether the king made any needed reforms in his attitude or behavior is not revealed. But, in any case, his overall problem clearly remained—his supreme arrogance with regard to his own power and prestige. As Nebuchadnezzar walked on the roof of his palace, he boasted, "Is this not the great Babylon I have built as the royal residence, by my mighty power and for the glory of my majesty?" (verse 30, NIV). Here was evidence from his own mouth that he had not been humbled by his dream's revelation and warning. Possibly his pride had even grown.

The king had "made Babylon the greatest city of the world, the 'queen of Asia.' [The Greek historian] Herodotus, who saw it one and a half centuries later, declared that there was no other city which could be compared with it. Babylon was built on a plain, on either side of the Euphrates, and had two surrounding walls. The outer wall, which went around the whole city, made a square" (Charles Seignobos, *The World of Babylon*, 1975, p. 69).

Historian Walter Kaiser Jr. writes: "It was a huge square, 480 stadia (55 1/4 miles) in circumference [making it nearly 2/3 the area of New York City], surrounded by a series of walls that made it virtually impregnable. Robert Koldewey, who excavated Babylon for eighteen years, verified how security-conscious Nebuchadnezzar was. The city walls were

surrounded, according to Koldewey, with a brick wall 22 1/3 feet thick, with a space outside that wall some 38 1/3 feet wide, then another brick wall 25 feet thick. In the event that this outer wall was breached, the invader would be trapped between two walls. Inside the inner wall was another wall 12 feet thick. Every 160 feet the walls were topped by watchtowers, 360 towers in all, reaching the height probably of some 90 feet, not 300 feet mentioned by Herodotus, and wide enough to accommodate two chariots riding side by side....

"He also constructed the city gates of cedar wood covered with strips of bronze. Numerous gates...were installed in the walls. The most famous of these, the Ishtar Gate [now on display in the Pergamon Museum in Berlin], was fifteen feet wide and its arched passage way was thirty-five feet above the level of the street. This gate led directly into the Processional Way, which was used primarily for the great annual New Year's Festival. The pavement was 73 1/2 feet wide and was lined with a series of 120 lions in enameled relief at 64-foot intervals.

"Along this Processional Way was the famous ziggurat or staged tower known as E-temen-anki, 'The House of the Foundation of Heaven and Earth,' which rose 300 feet high and could be seen for miles around the city. It is estimated that some 58,000,000 bricks were used in the construction of this ziggurat. Atop this seven-staged or terraced tower was a temple of Marduk, the god of Babylon....

"On a mound called Kasr, Nebuchadnezzar built one of his most impressive palaces. Its walls were made of yellow brick and the floors were of white and mottled sandstone. Near this palace were the famed hanging gardens, considered one of the Seven Wonders of the World....

"Babylon was a marvel of city planning. It was laid out in rectangles with wide roads named after the gods of Babylon. A bridge connected the eastern or new city with the western city across the river that flowed through the city. It had stone piers on both shores some 600

feet across the river, with a wooden footpath thirty feet wide that reached from shore to shore. The dwellings of the city often reached three or four stories high with the familiar eastern central courtyard" (*A History of Israel*, 1988, pp. 415-416).

Yes, Nebuchadnezzar had accomplished great things—but it is God who decides who will rule nations. All the amassed wealth and power of human beings eventually count for nothing (verse 35). The mighty king of Babylon is at last brought to this humbling realization.

It is interesting to note that throughout the seven-year exile, Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom is protected and is ready and waiting for his restored leadership when God heals him. Surely many officials in this large kingdom had greedy ambition, so it seems evident that it was God's intervention that secured the kingdom for him.

Some historians have compared Nebuchadnezzar's insanity to the story of the later Babylonian emperor Nabonidus, some even claiming the story in Daniel is misattributed, but there are significant differences. "Some scholars have proposed the thesis that the story of Nebuchadnezzar's madness in the book of Daniel is a distorted reflection of Nabonidus's exile in Arabia. It is now clear from the new Haran inscriptions that Nabonidus was in exile for ten years and not for seven as had been thought previously ([Daniel 4:32](#) speaks of 'seven times'). Among other objections to this theory is the fact that this interpretation was based on Sidney Smith's rendering of a line in the Persian Verse Account, which is no longer tenable. Nabonidus's behavior may seem erratic but he was not mad. Unfortunately we have few details about the last thirty years of Nebuchadnezzar's life. He died soon after October 562 and was succeeded by his son Evil-Merodach" (Edwin Yamauchi, *The New International Dictionary of Biblical Archaeology*, 1983, p. 334).

One other point that should be made in regard to this section is the possibility of duality in the prophetic dream. A king and his kingdom are often interchangeable in Bible prophecy. Indeed, that is clear from the previous dream of Nebuchadnezzar. The tree of the present dream may represent not only Nebuchadnezzar but the Babylonian Empire as well. Babylon fell in 539 B.C., but we know from the book of Revelation that it is to experience an end-time revival as a powerful European empire dominated by a great false Christian system referred to in Revelation 17 as "Babylon the Great." Indeed, as explained in the Beyond Today Bible Commentary on Isaiah 13, the ancient Chaldeans and Babylonians eventually relocated to southern Europe. In essence, the "roots" of the tree remained to sprout anew in the future. Considering this, it has been proposed that the "seven times" could be viewed as seven 360-day prophetic years. The prophetic "day-for-a-year" principle (see [Numbers 14:34](#); [Ezekiel 4:6](#)) yields 2,520 years (i.e., 360 x 7)—perhaps stretching from the fall of ancient Babylon to the beginnings of its revival in modern times. While we can't be certain, this does seem possible—particularly as there may be a parallel to this figure of 2,520 in the mysterious inscription of Daniel 5, as we will later examine.”

[END]

Day 660 – MONDAY: June 2nd

Ezekiel 40

Daily Deep Dive:

This daily reading has three images that you can see at the UCG commentary page:

<https://www.ucg.org/learn/bible-commentary/beyond-today-bible-commentary-ezekiel/ezekiel-40>

The UCG reading plan states: “Fourteen years have passed since Jerusalem and the temple were destroyed (verse 1). But beginning with chapter 40, Ezekiel relates a vision of a future temple, city and nation, which must have given hope to those in captivity. Indeed, with the

Jerusalem temple in ashes, Ezekiel does not only say there will be a new one.

He gives extraordinary details of a coming temple complex and a new arrangement of the Holy Land that was quite different than what they knew from the past. This no doubt gave those who heard it great confidence in the truth of it—for how could Ezekiel have come up with all this on his own?

[See the 3 images at this point in the reading if you haven't already done so]

Some have argued for a historical fulfillment of this passage, either through the reconstructed temple by Zerubbabel after the ancient Jewish return from Babylonian captivity or through Herod's later expansion on this second temple. Others see the prophecy as an allegorical representation of God's spiritual temple, His Church. And there are other ideas. *The Expositor's Bible Commentary* has this to say on the matter:

"These chapters have been interpreted as referring to Solomon's temple, the temple of Zerubbabel (either real or proposed), Herod's temple, or a future temple in the Millennium or in the eternal state. Some, having difficulty understanding the passage when taken literally, interpret the section allegorically as teaching about the church and its earthly blessings and glories, while others understand the passage to symbolize the reality of the heavenly temple where Christ ministers today.

"The historical fulfillments do not fit the details of the passage. The temples of Solomon, Zerubbabel, or Herod do not share the design and dimensions of the temple described in Ezekiel 40-42. The worship procedure set forth in chapters 43-46, though Mosaic in nature, has not been followed in history in exactly the manner described in these

chapters. The river that flows forth from the temple in 47:1-12 has never flowed from any of the three historical temples mentioned above. The only comparisons to this river are seen in [Genesis 2:8-14](#) and [Revelation 22:1-2](#) (cf. [Isa 35:6-7](#); [Joel 3:18](#); [Zech 14:8](#)). The geographical dimensions and tribal allotments of the land are certainly not feasible today, nor have they ever been followed in times past. Geographical changes will be necessary prior to the fulfillment of chapters 45, 47-48 [of Ezekiel]. Therefore, one would not look to historical (past or present) fulfillments of these chapters but to the future.

"The figurative or 'spiritualizing' interpretative approach does not seem to solve any of the problems of Ezekiel 40-48; it tends to create new ones. When the interpreter abandons a normal [literal interpretation] because the passage does not seem to make sense taken that way and opts for an interpretative procedure by which he can allegorize, symbolize, or 'spiritualize,' the interpretations become subjective. Different aspects of a passage mean whatever the interpreter desires. There are no governing interpretative principles [in that case] except the interpreter's mind (though there is appeal to the... [New Testament's revelation of spiritual meaning behind many facets of the Old Testament]). Even apocalyptic visions such as found in these chapters [at the end of Ezekiel] require a normal [literal method of interpretation]. To interpret these chapters in any manner other than a normal, literal approach would appear to contradict the interpretative guide in the vision who warns Ezekiel that he is to write down all the minute details concerning the plan for the temple and its regulations so that these details might be considered carefully and followed in every aspect (40:4; 43:10-11; 44:5; cf. [Exod 25:9](#); [1 Chronicles 28:19](#)). Therefore, a figurative approach does not adequately treat the issues of Ezekiel 40-48.

"In order to determine the general timeframe of these chapters, they will be examined in light of the development and flow of Ezekiel's argument in the entire book. He has shown the presence of God's glory in the historical Jerusalem temple and its departure from that temple because of Israel's sin of breaking the Mosaic covenant. The Fall of Jerusalem and the Captivity in Babylon were the consequence (chs. 4-24). After declaring how the nations would also be judged (25:1-33:20), Ezekiel encouraged the Jewish captives through six...messages of hope (33:21-39:29). In these he informed them that the Messiah would restore them to their Promised Land in the future and become a true shepherd to them. They would be cleansed, and all their covenants would be fulfilled. Even in the end times, after the land prospers and Israel dwells securely in it, some will try to take the Promised Land away from Israel and profane the Lord's name; but the Lord will not permit it (chs. 38-39). It would seem logical, therefore, that Ezekiel would conclude the logical and chronological development of his prophecy by describing the messianic kingdom and the return of God's glory to govern his people (chs. 40-48) rather than suddenly reverting back to some historical period, whether immediately following the Captivity or during Herod's temple, or to describe an idealistic temple.

"Ezekiel appears to have been contrasting the past and contemporary desecration of the temple and its regulations with the future holiness and righteousness of the temple and its functions. Ezekiel also used this format in chapters 33-39. The correct fixture procedure would bring shame and conviction on Ezekiel's contemporaries (43:6-12; 44:5-16; 45:9-12). This would again point to a future fulfillment of these chapters.

"God's glory is a most important feature of Ezekiel's prophecy. The return of God's glory to the new temple in 43:1-12 is the climax of the book. The context implies that this could only occur after Israel has been restored to her Promised Land and cleansed. The stress is on

holiness. Holiness had not characterized Israel as a people heretofore; and, according to Ezekiel 36, Israel would not be a holy people in accord with God's standard till after they had been restored to the Promised Land and cleansed in the Messianic Age. When God's glory returns, it will remain in Israel's midst forever (43:6-7). The development of this unifying factor in Ezekiel's prophecy would argue strongly for a future fulfillment of chapters 40-48.

"Finally, the entire context and argument of the Scriptures concerning God's outworking of his redemptive plan in history would seem to place these chapters and the aspects mentioned above in the time of the consummation of all history. This is perhaps best seen in the river of life that flows from the temple to bring healing to the land (47:1-12). This concept is first seen in [Genesis 2:8-14](#) in the Garden of Eden, the perfect environment of God's holiness. With sin, this garden and its river were removed. When God concludes his redemptive program and brings full salvation to mankind with eternal life through the passion of Jesus Christ his Son, it is most appropriate that the river of eternal life would again flow to demonstrate full healing on the earth. This conclusion to the full circle of God's redemptive program is also shown in [Revelation 22:1-6](#) in God's description of the eternal state. Such is also conveyed by other O[ld] T[estament] prophets (cf. [Isa 35:5-6](#); [Joel 3:18](#); [Zech 14:8](#)).

"Therefore, the context and argument of the Book of Ezekiel as well as the development of God's redemptive program argue strongly for a future fulfillment of the events of Ezekiel 40-48 in the end times" (introductory notes on chapters 40-48).

Expositor's next takes up the issue of whether the vision is of the 1,000-year reign of Christ (the Millennium) or the eternal state beyond it. As it explains, the obvious differences between the descriptions in Ezekiel and those of the New Jerusalem in Revelation 21-22 make it clear that

Ezekiel's vision is of Jerusalem and the Promised Land during the Millennium.

Many have great difficulty with the concept of a sacrificial system being reinstituted in the future. The book of Hebrews explains regarding the Old Testament system that "in those sacrifices there is [only] a reminder of sins every year. For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins" (10:4). Rather, Jesus Christ has "once...appeared to put away sins by the sacrifice of Himself" and "we have been sacrificed through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all" (9:26; 10:10). Israel's ritual system, we are told, "was symbolic for the present time...imposed until the time of reformation" (9:9)—meaning the Church age. This is why many try to interpret these chapters at the end of Ezekiel allegorically.

Expositor's notes: "The writer of Hebrews goes on to say that where sins have been forgiven, there is no longer any sacrifice for sin. Understood in the context of Hebrews described above, there is no longer the need for the picture lessons and reminders now that the reality of Christ's efficacious blood sacrifice has been offered once and for all. No other efficacious sacrifice could be offered because only Christ's sacrifice of himself is efficacious. *However, the writer of Hebrews does not declare that pictorial sacrifices and festivals absolutely can no longer be observed as reminders and picture lessons of what Christ did after his singularly efficacious sacrifice has been completed.* Since the sacrifices and festivals in the O[ld] T[estament] system were only pictures, they could never conflict with the sacrifice of the Messiah. They never were and never could be efficacious. Likewise, the sacrifices in the millennial system described by Ezekiel are only picture lessons and reminders of the sin of man and of the only efficacious sacrifice for sin once and for all made by Christ. The millennial sacrifices will be both reminders to believers in millennial worship and picture lessons to unbelievers born in the Millennium.

(These 'unbelievers' could be born from the Jews who enter the Millennium from the tribulation period.) On the basis of the O[ld] T[estament] role of the sacrifices and the argument of the writer of Hebrews, it does not appear that the pictorial sacrifices of the Mosaic system nor the memorial sacrifices of the millennial worship conflict with the finished and complete work of Jesus' sacrifice for all sins once and for all on the cross. Consequently, the sacrifices in the millennial sacrificial system of Ezekiel appear to be only memorials of Christ's finished work and pictorial reminders that mankind by nature is sinful and in need of redemption from sin. Not only is this view substantiated by comparison with the Mosaic covenant in which the sacrifices were picture lessons and types, but it is also confirmed by the writer of Hebrews as observed above" (emphasis added).

Today, Christians can and should gain a great deal of insight into the reconciling and saving work of Jesus Christ through studying the Old Testament tabernacle and temple and its sacrificial system. Yet that insight is certainly limited by having to construct in mental pictures, based on complex and detailed passages, what it was like. Just imagine the establishment of a living, functioning model at the world's capital. What a wonderful teaching tool this will provide for the Israelites living in the Promised Land and, as there will likely still be mass communications at that time, for all mankind.

The Millennial Temple Complex

Ezekiel's vision was received on the tenth day of the first month. "If it is correct to designate the month as Nisan [the first month on the religious calendar], then this apocalyptic vision would have been received on the tenth day of Nisan, the very day the people may have begun to prepare for the Passover four days later. Whether they actually observed the Passover or not in exile, surely they would be contemplating Israel's redemption out of Egypt and the creation of their nation. This vision, then, would be an encouragement that the

Lord would complete his purposes for the nation in the messianic kingdom" (*Expositor's Bible Commentary*, note on verse 1-4).

We then get into the specifics of what Ezekiel saw. The details often make the reading of this section tedious and incomprehensible. Also, there is a great deal of dispute about what all of the measurements are, and what they refer to. Nevertheless, with the information provided here and historical details we have of the past Jerusalem temples, we can get a good idea of what the magnificent temple to be built at the return of Jesus Christ will probably look like.

Ezekiel is first taken to a "very high mountain" (verse 2), perhaps signifying the nation of Israel in a figurative sense, as it will be the chief nation of the Millennium. It could also represent the Kingdom of God, the ultimate peak of which will be the heavenly "mount of the congregation in the farthest sides of the north" ([Isaiah 14:13](#))—for despite the fact that Jesus Christ will rule from the earthly Jerusalem over all nations, heaven will, during the Millennium, remain the seat of God the Father and thus the pinnacle of the Kingdom. In any case, the prophet is able to see on the southern part of this mountain what appears to him to be something like a city. Indeed, when we reconstruct the temple complex according to the measurements given, this is just what it looks like. Ezekiel was probably familiar with the city of Babylon with its thick walls and gates, and he probably found some similarity. Yet as a future city, we could perhaps expect some things Ezekiel saw to be more like one of our modern cities than what he himself was accustomed to.

The complex of buildings occupies a square, 500 cubits on each side, covering about 25 acres. Carefully arranged within the complex are variously sized open courtyards surrounded by buildings, many of which are several stories tall. A number of "towers" can be seen (see [Psalm 48:13](#)). One structure in the middle of the complex apparently reaches to the height of a modern 25-story building. And

surrounding the square of buildings there is a large open parkland that is enclosed by a wall, defining the outer perimeter of the grounds of this "city."

There is some confusion as to exactly where the millennial temple complex will be located. The question centers on the meaning of Zion or Mount Zion in other passages. The Bible elsewhere makes it clear that Jesus Christ will reign from Zion ([Psalm 132:13-14](#); [Isaiah 2:3](#); [8:18](#); [18:7](#); [Micah 4:2, 7](#)). Zion was the area of David's Jerusalem. The Temple Mount, a higher hill just north of the City of David where Solomon's and the later temple complexes sat, is Mount Moriah ([2 Chronicles 3:1](#)). When Solomon's temple was built, the Ark of the Covenant was brought up to the Temple Mount *from* "the city of David, which is Zion" ([1 Kings 8:1](#)).

This has led some to conclude that Zion is restricted to the area of David's city. If that is the case, then the millennial temple will be located here, south of the present Temple Mount. This southern area, however, is a rather narrow hilltop with higher hills surrounding it, so the topography of the area would have to be drastically altered. This could well be as Zion is to be exalted and built up (see [Isaiah 2:2](#); [40:9](#); [Micah 4:1](#); [Psalm 102:16](#)). Indeed, the whole area around Jerusalem is going to become a plain ([Zechariah 14:10](#)). Why might the temple be moved? Perhaps to symbolize that God's throne is no longer high above Jerusalem in a heavenly place but has rather come down to the earthly capital—where sits the throne of David that Jesus will assume.

But that's only if the temple really is to be moved. It could well be that Zion applies to all of Jerusalem. Indeed, the name *Jerusalem* originally applied to the City of David. The Temple Mount was then incorporated into Jerusalem. If Zion was simply synonymous with Jerusalem, then the Temple Mount would have been part of Zion. The city later came to encompass a larger area to the west, which all became part of

Jerusalem—and perhaps of Zion. Today, the hill to the west of David's city is referred to as Zion. Yet it seems quite possible that the biblical designation of Zion applies to the entire city of Jerusalem. Indeed, in [Isaiah 2:3](#), the two seem to mean exactly the same place. Ezekiel's temple complex could easily fit on the current Temple Mount—yet even in that case, major topographical changes will still be made to the area.

After seeing an overview of the complex, Ezekiel is brought down to it, where he meets his tour guide standing at a gate. This "man" is holding a measuring rod and a line of flax (apparently a measuring tape of unspecified length, used for especially long measurements). He tells Ezekiel to record what he sees for the benefit of the house of Israel, and ultimately for our instruction ([Ezekiel 40:3-4](#)).

The length of the measuring rod is given as six cubits. There is some dispute about the size of a cubit. Many consider a cubit to have been 18 inches. Others claim a standard cubit was about 21 inches, or some other length. Since the cubit being used here is defined as one handbreadth longer than the standard cubit of the day (verse 5), we could expect something longer than the standard by about 4 inches. (Four inches is the current measure of a "hand," as used in measuring horses). Without going into all of the supporting evidence, there is some indication that the Hebrew cubit was based on "handbreadths" or palms, and that a palm was 3.6 inches. This would make an 18-inch cubit equal to five palms, and a 21.6-inch cubit six palms (perhaps this was the "cubit of a man" after the number of man—see [Deuteronomy 3:11 KJV](#); [Revelation 13:18](#)). We are proceeding on the assumption of a seven-palm, 25.2-inch cubit, as described in the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 11th edition, article "Weights and Measures." Some may insist this is too long, but the relative proportions of the buildings remain the same regardless of which cubit size is used. And with the seven-palm cubit, rooms that appear to be bed-chambers turn out to

have the square footage of modern college dormitory rooms; rooms used for private dining are just over 12 feet square; the tables used for holding the instruments for sacrifice come to a reasonable work table height and the tables for the showbread ([Exodus 25:23](#)) would have been as a normal countertop or buffet table in height. Using a much smaller cubit would yield some uncomfortably small rooms and furnishings.

With the seven-palm, 25.2-inch cubit, the measuring rod used by Ezekiel's guide is 12.6 feet long. The tour begins with the measuring of an outer wall, which is one rod high, and one rod thick ([Ezekiel 40:5](#)). It is often assumed that this first wall Ezekiel encounters surrounds the "outer court" of the temple (verse 17). There are problems with this, however, as this wall is described as being "all around the outside of the temple," and yet there are a number of other structures that clearly occupy some of the space that this wall would have to occupy if it were there. While it could perhaps be an outer building wall in places, discrepancies in building height and other features make even this resolution awkward. And in verse 6, it says they went to the east gate and went up the stairs (giving the impression of approaching it) after measuring this wall. This seems to imply that the six-cubit wall was behind them, outside of the gate they were approaching. And indeed, as described in chapter 42, there is a freestanding wall much further out to enclose an open parkland around the temple complex. Perhaps it was in one of the gates of this outer park wall that the man with the measuring instruments was standing to greet Ezekiel and show him through this "city" of the future.

In any case, they enter the eastern gate of the building complex after climbing some steps. The actual number of steps for the eastern gate is not given, but the northern and southern gates each have seven steps (40:22, 26). The eastern gate may have the same number, or there may be more, considering that the eastern side of the temple complex may

sit above a steeper slope than the other sides. There is a valley, the Kidron Valley, running just below the east side of both the current Temple Mount and the City of David. So there could well be a need for additional steps.

Next we are given the dimensions of the gates. Each gateway comprises a narrow, 50-cubit-long (105-foot) passageway through a large building complex. In the middle of the gateway is a small open-air courtyard (25 cubits wide, verse 13, and at least as long) with three six-cubit (12.6-foot) square rooms on either side. These rooms may at times be used as dining rooms for leaders (as alluded to in [Ezekiel 44:3](#)). And they may also be used by the priests as counseling rooms for judging private disputes (see [Deuteronomy 16:18](#); [17:8-9](#); [Ezekiel 44:24](#)).

The thresholds at the outer entrance of the gateway corridor are fairly narrow (only 12.6 feet wide), symbolically picturing the constricted nature of the gate into the Kingdom of God ([Matthew 7:14](#)). The entrance gates will be attended by gatekeepers (as in former days, [1 Chronicles 9:22-24](#); [2 Chronicles 23:19](#); [Ezekiel 44:11](#)), who will have the responsibility of restricting entrance into the main courtyards of the temple to those who fit the scriptural requirements of being clean, both spiritually and physically—circumcised in mind and body (see 44:9, 23).

Other details about these gates are given, but the exact application of each measurement is not always clear. The accompanying diagram provides the basic outline and one interpretation of Ezekiel's description. Controversy especially surrounds the height of these gates. [Ezekiel 40:14](#) describes "gateposts" that are 60 cubits (126 feet) high—or about 12 stories tall. While some reject the idea that this is a vertical dimension, there is no reason to believe it is not. Most feel it applies at least to the "vestibule" or "porch" (KJV) located on the inner side of the gate (verses 8-9), but whether it is a narrow tower over just the entrance, or whether it stretches across the entire 50-cubit face of

the gate is not clear. If it did, it would give the gate some design similarity to the temple itself. Another view applies this measurement to the entire gate complex (to all its vertical support members), in a design that Ezekiel would have recognized as being similar to most ancient city gates.

Many of the "walls" Ezekiel encounters are five or six cubits thick (10.5-12.6 feet), and quite capable of containing small rooms. Since it was common in ancient times for rooms or passageways to be built into and on the city walls (as was the house of Rahab in Jericho, [Joshua 2:15](#)), we must not assume that everything Ezekiel refers to as a "wall" was a completely solid structure throughout. While these walls could be primarily for insulation, one could also speculate on what functional use might be made of this space, including perhaps closets, restrooms, utility rooms, and, considering the height of some of these buildings, even elevators and stairwells.

Passing through the eastern gate, Ezekiel and his guide enter the outer court, move on to the northern gate, and then to the southern gate, which are said to all be of the same design. The outer court is 100 cubits wide (210 feet), between the outer and inner gates ([Ezekiel 40:19](#), [23](#), [27](#)). And, in the area adjacent to the outer gates are 30 chambers, perhaps five chambers on each side of the three gates, each of them located in the center of their respective 500-cubit span. In front of these chambers is a pavement, or walkway, to provide access to them (verses 17-18).

Ezekiel states that these 30 chambers "faced the pavement," which he defined as the "lower pavement." This may mean he was giving only the number of chambers on the ground floor. As we will see, certain other chamber-bearing structures have at least three stories, and there is reason to believe these outer court buildings are multilevel structures as well. For example, [Ezekiel 42:6](#) describes a three-story building which did not need pillars "like the pillars of the courts" because it was built

with a terraced design so that upper floors could have front patios built on the rooftops of the lower floors. This implies that there were pillars in the courts being used as the structural means of supporting multilevel patios or walkway pavements.

The Inner Gates and Court

From the outer south gate, Ezekiel is brought across the outer court to the inner south gate. These inner gates are basically mirror images of the outer gates, so that the "vestibules" or "archways" of the outer gates (verses 31, 34, 37, apparently the main entryways of each gate) face the corresponding "archways" of the inner gates. One difference is that there are eight steps leading up to the inner gates, instead of seven (verse 31). After going through, and measuring, the inner south gate, they move on to the east inner gate, and then the north inner gate, all mirror images of the outer gates, and directly across from them.

At the north gate, Ezekiel sees several items directly related to the offering of sacrifices, including tables and utensils, and the entrance to a room for washing the meat for the burnt offering (verses 38-43; [Leviticus 1:9, 13](#)). In Solomon's time the burnt offerings were washed using elaborate open-air lavers (water tanks) situated in the inner courtyard around the temple. Ezekiel describes no such lavers in the millennial temple, nor any lavers for the priests to wash themselves in (as used at the tabernacle, [Exodus 30:18-21](#)), nor any cast bronze "sea" (the 21-foot diameter water tank, that Solomon had set up at the southeast corner of the temple for the priests' washing, see [2 Chronicles 4:2-6, 10](#)). Since Ezekiel describes an indoor facility northeast of the temple for the washing of the burnt offerings, we might expect to find additional space there (and especially in the parallel location southeast of the temple) with washrooms for the priests. And we might also expect that all of these rooms will be fully equipped with modern indoor plumbing.

After touring the north inner court gate, Ezekiel is shown rooms for the priests (now limited to the sons of Zadok, see [Ezekiel 40:46; 44:15-31](#)), apparently on the east side of the north and south gates, facing each other. They are described as "chambers for the singers" (40:44-46), so they are likely to be used as rehearsal rooms for priests who will undoubtedly once again be "employed in *that* work [making music in praise to God and doing other temple and altar work] day and night" in rotating shifts throughout the year ([1 Chronicles 9:25-33](#)). These gates and rooms surround a 100-cubit square courtyard located in front of the temple sanctuary. This inner courtyard is in the center of the entire temple complex, with the altar of burnt offering ([Ezekiel 40:47](#)) as the focal point in the very middle of everything.

With the last two verses (48-49), Ezekiel completes his counterclockwise tour of the inner court by arriving at the vestibule (porch) of the temple itself, on the west side of the courtyard. Two pillars are briefly mentioned in verse 49, probably identical to the ancient temple pillars described in some detail in [1 Kings 7:15-22](#) and [2 Chronicles 3:15-17](#). Comparing the design of the pillars of the temple of Solomon with extra-biblical records about similar pillars in the court of the second temple, we can surmise that they may have been used as enormous torches—oil lamps on a grand scale. (The Herodian temple had four such courtyard lamps.)” [END]

Day 661 – TUESDAY: June 3rd

Ezekiel 41

Daily Deep Dive:

There is another image today to start the reading found here:

<https://www.ucg.org/learn/bible-commentary/beyond-today-bible-commentary-ezekiel/ezekiel-41>

The UCG reading plan states: “The temple sanctuary building itself is not described in detail in Ezekiel. But it is described enough to recognize that the design is very much like that of both the tabernacle

and the temple Solomon built. This makes sense when we realize that the designs of these earlier structures were given by God to reflect the pattern of the heavenly temple (see [Exodus 25:8-9](#); [26:30](#); [1 Chronicles 28:11-12](#), [19](#); [Hebrews 8:5](#)). To get a full picture of Ezekiel's temple, it is often necessary to refer to details given elsewhere about the first temple, and even the tabernacle.

For example, the height of the vestibule or "porch" (the entrance hall structure) of the future temple is not given in Ezekiel. It is described in [2 Chronicles 3:4](#) as being 120 cubits (252 feet) in height, making it as tall as a modern 25-story building. The lobby of this entrance hall is described by [Ezekiel 40:49](#) as having inside dimensions of 11 x 20 cubits (23 x 42 feet).

Ezekiel now enters the Holy Place from the vestibule (verses 1-2). There are only two rooms in the temple sanctuary, each 20 cubits (42 feet) in width. The first, called elsewhere the Holy Place, is 20 x 40 cubits (42 x 84 feet). The height is given in [1 Kings 6:2](#) as 30 cubits (63 feet). In the tabernacle and first temple, it contained the table of showbread, the seven-branched lampstand or menorah and the altar of incense. Only the incense altar is mentioned here ([Ezekiel 41:22](#)), but that could be because it is specifically mentioned as being larger. Perhaps the other furnishings, if present, were the same as Ezekiel already knew them to be from the first temple.

The inner room (verses 3-4), called the Most Holy Place or Holy of Holies, is a square 20 x 20 cubits. According to [1 Kings 6:20](#) its height is also 20 cubits. In the tabernacle and first temple it contained the Ark of the Covenant. Ezekiel does not mention the ark. [Jeremiah 3:16-17](#) says: "Then it shall come to pass...that they will say no more, 'The ark of the covenant of the Lord.' It shall not come to mind, nor shall they remember it, nor shall they visit it, nor shall it be made anymore. At that time Jerusalem shall be called The Throne of the Lord, and all the nations shall be gathered to it, to the name of the Lord, to Jerusalem."

This could mean that there won't be an ark there at all. However, that seems somewhat odd given that there is a heavenly ark that would likely still be typified in the millennial temple (see [Revelation 11:19](#)). The point of Jeremiah's statement may simply be that the actual bodily presence of God in the person of the glorified Jesus Christ will so overshadow the ark that this representative object will not even be thought of. People will go to Jerusalem *not* to visit the mere resting place of the ark, but rather to see where the Almighty King sits enthroned in majesty. What is the ark itself compared to that awesome reality? (Interestingly, the statement that the ark will not be "made anymore" could even indicate that the original ark will be the one brought back and used—though the word rendered "made" can be variously translated, so the meaning is not entirely clear.)

Further details on the design and decor of the temple can be found in 1 Kings 6 (verses 2-4, 14-32). It can also be noted that most of the dimensions of the temple structure are twice that of the tabernacle (see [Exodus 26:15-30](#)). With this initial brief description of the temple sanctuary, Ezekiel moves beyond its 6-cubit-thick (12.6-foot) walls ([Ezekiel 41:5](#)), to the 90 side chambers that surround it. Combined with [1 Kings 6:5-6](#) and verse 10 we learn that each room is four cubits in width and five cubits tall, but five, six or seven cubits in length depending on which of the three stories the rooms were on, with the larger rooms on the top floor. (These chambers bolster the argument for a seven-palm cubit, which would make the smaller rooms 8.4 x 10.5 feet, with 10.5-foot stories. With a five-palm or 18-inch cubit, these rooms would only be 6 x 7.5 feet, with a rather short 7.5 feet between floors.) The step-like construction of these chambers is described, with the explanation that the configuration allows each floor to be supported on the temple side using one-cubit ledges, rather than requiring fasteners penetrating into the temple wall itself ([Ezekiel 41:6-7](#); compare [1 Kings 6:6](#)). No mention is given here as to the purpose for these chambers, but other verses (for example, [1 Chronicles 9:27](#))

describe Levites lodging all around the house of God. These rooms do seem about the size of bedrooms, with the third floor chambers being large enough for double occupancy. (This would allow a total of 120 beds.)

We were earlier told that there were steps leading up to the temple (40:49). The number is not given. [Ezekiel 41:8](#) describes a six-cubit elevation around the temple for the side chambers, but when all the various measurements are laid out, it appears that this foundation does not extend underneath the temple itself. There is also a five-cubit-wide terrace along the outside of the side chambers, undoubtedly with a restraining rail of some sort for the safety of those using it (verse 11; see [Deuteronomy 22:8](#)). The 20-cubit-wide walkway (verse 10) appears to be the one on the ground level between the temple and the inner court buildings.

In verse 12, Ezekiel is shown one of these buildings—the very large structure on the western side of the inner courtyard. It is 70 x 90 cubits inside (nearly 28,000 square feet). Not much is said about it here, but in [1 Chronicles 26:12-18](#) a storehouse is mentioned, adjacent to a highway, which could only have been on the western side of the temple complex where there were no outer courts. Several other scriptures mention such a storehouse (see [1 Kings 7:51](#); [Nehemiah 10:38](#); [12:44](#); [13:12-13](#); [Malachi 3:10](#)) as a place for keeping tithes, offerings and firstfruits, as well as temple articles of gold and silver. Since most all of the other buildings are multiple stories, it is also quite likely that this building is similarly tall.

We are then given several measurements that are all 100 cubits ([Ezekiel 41:13](#)). First, the temple itself from east to west is 100 cubits. Second, from the west outer edge of the temple complex through the storehouse and walkway to the west edge of the temple itself is also 100 (5+70+5+20 cubits). We were previously told of the 100-cubit courtyard in the center, and the two 50-cubit east gates with a 100-

cubit outer court between them, making the entire complex from west to east 500 cubits, as already mentioned. The north-south dimensions were already defined as two 50-cubit gates and a 100-cubit outer courtyard on each side of the 100-cubit inner courtyard at the center. We are now also told that the eastern face of the temple and two 20-cubit walkways are the exact width of the 100-cubit inner court, making the temple itself 60 cubits wide (verse 14). The western storehouse is also confirmed to be 100 cubits wide (90 plus the two five-cubit-wide walls, verse 15).

The remainder of the chapter contains details on the appearance of the temple. These include windows and wall decorations of palm trees and "cherubim," creatures that in this case had two faces, as opposed to the four faces Ezekiel had seen many years earlier (see Ezekiel 1). There is also a description of the incense altar (41:22), which was a cubit higher and wider than that of the tabernacle (see [Exodus 30:2](#)). Finally, we are given descriptions of the bi-fold doors to each of the two rooms of the temple. Further details are given in 1 Kings 6 about windows and wall decorations, although in some cases differences can be noted." [END]

Day 662 – WEDNESDAY: June 4th

Ezekiel 42 & 43

Daily Deep Dive:

The UCG reading plan states: "Ezekiel now leaves the immediate temple area and proceeds through the inner north gate to the outer courtyard, and over to a 100 x 50 cubit, three-story building on the west side of the gate (verses 1-3). This building, and the corresponding one next to the inner south gate, are said to be dining chambers where the priests eat the holy offerings (verse 13). They have an interesting terraced construction, where each floor is narrower than the one below it (verses 5-6). The rooms on the ground floor are said to have a 10-cubit-wide indoor corridor in front of them (verse 4). The upper floors are each set back, to allow for rooftop patios (outdoor corridors) in

front of the second- and third-floor rooms. The first- and second-floor rooms are the same size, but the third-floor rooms are smaller (verses 5-6).

At the end of this chapter, Ezekiel is taken through the outer east gate to measure the enclosed temple district. Notice these measurements are using the measuring rod of six cubits. So rather than being the 500 cubits per side of the temple complex, this is a 3,000-cubit-per-side "holy area" (verse 20). The word "cubits" in the NKJV is italicized in verse 20. The KJV translators correctly used "reeds," as specifically stated in the previous verses. This is describing a walled area 1.2 miles square, probably of carefully landscaped parkland, with the temple complex in the middle of it. This gives a "buffer zone" of almost exactly one half mile between the outside walls of the temple complex and the walls around its grounds.

If this outer wall is also the one we saw in [Ezekiel 40:5](#), then it is about 12 feet thick and 12 feet high. What purpose might this serve? The parkland surrounding the temple "city" could be more than just open space. It could serve as an area for tents or booths during the pilgrimage feasts, especially the Feast of Tabernacles. If so, this thick wall could house much needed bathroom facilities, or supply other indoor needs for the large numbers of visitors.

Ezekiel 43: Returning to the east gate, Ezekiel is now given a glimpse of the awesome and thrilling arrival of Jesus Christ (identified by Ezekiel as the coming of the "glory of the Lord") to this newly completed temple, a scene that reminded him of the visions he had recorded earlier in his book (verses 1-5; see Ezekiel 1; 10). [Ezekiel 10:18-19](#) had specifically mentioned God leaving the temple, after which it was destroyed. Here we have God returning again.

Verses 6-12 contain one of several sets of warning and instruction from God about what He expects the Israelites' behavior to be in this future

temple, in contrast to their abominable behavior in the one upon which He had recently brought destruction.

Altar of Burnt Offering

The bronze altar of burnt offering in Solomon's temple was 20 x 20 x 10 cubits ([2 Chronicles 4:1](#)), much bigger than the portable one for the tabernacle, which was 5 x 5 x 3 cubits (see [Exodus 27:1-2](#)). The altar Ezekiel sees is similar, but it is either more elaborate or simply related in greater detail. Four vertical parts are described: a one-cubit-deep gutter for catching the blood of the sacrifices, a two-cubit-high lower ledge, an upper ledge four cubits above that, and a four-cubit-high structure around the hearth (for a total above ground height of 10 cubits), with horns extending above that at the four corners. Each succeeding level seems to have a one-cubit setback associated with it, the upper-level hearth being 12 x 12 cubits, and increasing by two cubits each level to apparently 16 x 16 cubits at the ground level with a one-cubit-wide gutter below that. Steps for accessing the hearth are located on the east side (verse 17). The altar is massive. It is taller than a two-story building. The base of the hearth is more than 12 feet above the ground, and more than 600 square feet. With the sides of the hearth being eight feet tall, it is likely that doors are built into the sides of the altar for placing meat and tending to the fires and ashes, though none are specifically mentioned.

The chapter concludes with a description of the purification offerings for the altar (verses 18-27). As in the days of the tabernacle, the process will take seven days (see [Exodus 29:35-37](#)).” [END]

Day 663 – THURSDAY: June 5th

Ezekiel 44 & 45

Daily Deep Dive:

The UCG reading plan states: “Ezekiel is taken back to the outer east gate and discovers that now it has been shut. Following Christ's arrival,

no man will be allowed to use it (verses 1-2). However, one identified as the "prince" — ruler or leader—will be permitted to enter the eastern gate complex through its porch for eating certain ceremonial meals (verse 3). This person cannot be Jesus Christ, for we later discover that he must make a sin offering for himself ([Ezekiel 45:22](#)). Indeed, [Ezekiel 46:16-17](#) says the prince has natural children. Some have argued that the prince is the resurrected King David, as he will be prince over Israel in the Millennium ([Ezekiel 34:23-24](#); [Ezekiel 37:24](#)). Yet that doesn't fit either because David also would not need to offer a sin offering for himself. Nor would any of the glorified saints who will then no longer sin. So the prince here must be a human being who needs to repent of sin. From all that is written of the prince in chapters 45-46, it is evident that he is a civil leader, the highest human ruler of the day, probably of the house of David.

As the porch on an outer gate is on the inner side of a gate complex, the prince is entering the east gate from inside the temple area, from the outer courtyard. The outer door of the east gate remains shut, and even Ezekiel is no longer taken through the east gate door. We will later learn the rules governing the inner east gate, but for now, Ezekiel is caused to avoid the east gate, by being taken into the inner court again via the north gate ([Ezekiel 44:4](#)), where he receives more instruction about what is expected of the Israelites in this future temple.

Circumcision will still be in effect, or reinstated, for all who enter the holy sanctuary—the requirement being both physical and spiritual circumcision (verse 9). Sacrifices will also be reestablished, as noted earlier, which is clear throughout these chapters. The Levites will again serve in the temple as non-priestly ministers. Even the priestly descendants of Aaron, except for one branch, could only serve in this non-priestly capacity. The restrictions imposed on the Levites' assigned work will serve as a reminder of their family's failure to properly exercise their duties in the past (verses 10-14). However, God said the

descendants of Zadok (probably the priest who served during the reigns of David and Solomon, see [1 Kings 2:35](#)) remained faithful during those years of apostasy. And as a reward, they will become the priestly line ([Ezekiel 44:15](#)). (This will also fulfill promises given previously to descendants of Aaron and his grandson Phinehas, from whom Zadok descended—see Numbers 18; [Numbers 25:11-13](#).)

We are then reminded of some of the regulations regarding the priests, most of which had already been given through Moses. They are to wear special linen garments when on duty within the inner court or inner court buildings (verses 17-19; see [Exodus 28:39-43](#); [Leviticus 16:4](#)). Their hair is to be well trimmed (verse 20; see [Leviticus 21:5](#)). They are not to drink alcoholic beverages before performing their priestly duties (verse 21; see [Leviticus 10:9](#)). There are restrictions as to whom they can marry (verse 22; see [Leviticus 21:7](#), [13-14](#)). They have a responsibility to teach God's laws (verse 23; see [Leviticus 10:10](#)). They are to act as judges (verse 24; see [Deuteronomy 17:8-13](#)). They are not to defile themselves by exposure to those who have died (verse 25; see [Leviticus 21:1-4](#)). The priests were not to receive an inheritance in the land (verse 28; see [Numbers 18:20](#)). They were to eat the appointed offerings and tithes of the people (verses 29-30; see [Numbers 18:8-19](#)). But they were not allowed to eat any animal that had not been explicitly killed for eating (verse 31; see [Leviticus 22:8](#)).

While we see many parallels between the past and the future, no description of a human *high* priest among the Zadokite priests is given—presumably because Jesus Christ alone will fulfill that role in perpetuity. It is, of course, possible that there will be a leading human figure among the priests.

Ezekiel 45:

There is an image to see for today's reading:

<https://www.ucg.org/learn/bible-commentary/beyond-today-bible-commentary-ezekiel/ezekiel-45>

In chapter 42, we saw a "holy area" surrounding the temple complex that was a little over one square mile. Ezekiel is now told of a district surrounding this area that is 25,000 x 25,000 cubits (almost exactly 10 x 10 miles). The KJV uses "reeds" here, but the unit of measure is not actually given in the Hebrew. The NKJV says "cubits," which appears to be the correct rendering because the district would be unreasonably large if these measurements were using the full six-cubit measuring rod. There isn't that much land in the area, using the larger measure.

This area is also described in chapter 48, where more details are given, and between the two passages we discover that this "capital district" is divided into three main sections. One part is a 10,000-cubit- (4-mile-) wide strip that provides room for the priests' houses. The temple is contained in this portion (verses 1-4)—apparently with a 50-cubit easement outside the parkland wall to prevent anyone from building right up to it (see [Ezekiel 45:2](#)). Another section is also 10,000 cubits wide, and provides "twenty chambers" (probably referring to towns with their surrounding pasturelands, compare Numbers 35) for the Levites ([Ezekiel 45:5](#)). The final 5,000-cubit strip is for the city and the "whole house of Israel."

Stretching east and west from this 100 square mile district is land given to the "prince." In the same context God says that the Israelite leaders of that time would oppress His people no longer (verses 7-8). The people's land was not to be appropriated by the "government" (see also [Ezekiel 46:18](#)), which will have its own land and be responsible for providing certain representative offerings for the people out of the abundance owned by it ([Ezekiel 45:17](#)). Included in this are the festival offerings in the first and seventh months. We see in this section that God's Sabbath and feasts will be observed during the Millennium."

[END]

Day 664 – FRIDAY: June 6th

Ezekiel 46

Daily Deep Dive:

The UCG reading plan states: “As we saw earlier, the outer east gate will be permanently shut following Christ's arrival. The inner east gate is to be opened for certain religious observances, such as the Sabbaths and new moons. (During the workweek the inner east gate is closed, perhaps symbolic of the fact that mankind was shut out from God for six millennia as a result of sin.)

The prince is to bring the offerings he was instructed to provide for the people, and to go through the inner east gate to the edge of the inner court while these offerings are prepared. The gate is then to remain open for the remainder of the day, so that others may worship at the entrance of the gate (verses 1-3). If the prince brings an offering on a day when the east gate is normally shut, it will be opened for him, but closed again when he is finished with the offering (verse 12). And, as we saw earlier, if the prince was making a peace offering, he would proceed across the pavement of the outer courtyard to the outer east gate for eating his part of the sacrifice ([Ezekiel 44:3](#)).

[Ezekiel 46:9](#) describes an interesting traffic pattern for the annual feasts. When entering the temple courts for the feasts, the people will be required to pass through the outer courtyard, and not just go in and back out again the way they came. Some have suggested this as improving the traffic flow, but others see it perhaps as more symbolic of the people not returning to their former ways. The people will not likely just pass through, of course. Part of the reason for entering the temple is to partake of the peace offerings, which is the reason for the abundance of dining chambers, which probably also double as meeting rooms as such facilities often do for us today. But neither will the people come in just to eat of the sacrifices. Rather, everyone will be

required to go past the front of the east inner gate before proceeding on his way.

This area (between the inner and outer east gates) is 100 cubits wide, as we have seen ([Ezekiel 40:19](#)), and provides a place where praise and thanksgiving can be offered to God on the weekly Sabbaths and on the New Moons (46:3). But during the annual feasts, there will be too many people in attendance for all to gather together there for worship. Instead people will visit this place of prayer and singing as they are going out or coming in. And as they do so, they will also be crossing over the river of life that proceeds from God's temple (which we will read about in chapter 47). Then, in order to get back to where they came from (if they didn't circle around on their way to the temple), people will have to go around the outer perimeter of the temple complex as well (perhaps along the east side where they may wade in the river of life and, as mentioned in chapter 47, partake of the fruitful trees alongside it—elsewhere shown to parallel the tree of life—and gather of their leaves for their healing).

Inheritance laws are mentioned in verses 16-18 of Ezekiel 46, where we discover that the law of jubilees will be in effect, where land is returned to the family that originally owned it in the 50th year, the year of liberty (see Leviticus 25).

For the remainder of Ezekiel 46, the prophet is shown various cooking places. The bulk of sacrifices, especially at feasts, are peace offerings. Only the blood and fat of such sacrifices are offered to God. The remainder is eaten by the offerer, with a token portion consumed by the priest as well. Also, most sin and trespass offerings are eaten by the priests, and the grain offerings need to be baked. In chapter 42, we were shown the dining chambers for the priests—three-story buildings west of the north and south inner gates. Apparently, the "kitchens" for these chambers are to the west of the dining rooms, in the previously

unaccounted-for area at the northwest and southwest corners of the inner court building complex (verses 19-20).

It does not actually say whether the cooking places for the priests will be indoors or out. There are also cooking areas (in this case, outdoor patios with built-in, presumably wood-burning, stoves) for the temple servants (Levites, 44:11) to cook the peoples' portions of the sacrifices, located in the four corners of the outer court. We are told they are each 30 x 40 cubits (more than 5,000 square feet). Since the people also need places to eat this prepared food, this is most likely the purpose of the chambers that surround the outer court.” [END]

Day 665 – SATURDAY: June 7th

Ezekiel 47 & Ezekiel 48

Daily Deep Dive:

The UCG reading plan states: “Ezekiel is now taken again to the door of the temple itself, and shown something that either he failed to notice or describe the first time he toured the inner court, or that was not there prior to Christ's arrival. The river of the water of life begins at the very throne of God in the Most Holy Place ([Ezekiel 43:7](#)). This parallels the description of the New Jerusalem ([Revelation 22:1](#)), which will still be in heaven during the Millennium, to descend to earth afterward. In both cases, there is evidently a literal river—but the river symbolizes the living waters of God's Holy Spirit.

In the millennial temple, the river emerges from beneath the eastern threshold, proceeding past the south side of the altar (also defined as the "right" side, as one faces east).

Ezekiel is then taken out the northern gates and around to the outer eastern gate, outside of the temple complex, to again see the river as it emerges on the south (right) side of the eastern gate. They move along the river to measure the depth of the water by wading across at 1,000-

cubit intervals. By the time they reach 4,000 cubits (1.6 miles) from the eastern gate, the river is too deep to wade across.

Ezekiel mentions fruit-bearing and medicinal trees along the river ([Ezekiel 47:7](#); [Ezekiel 47:12](#)), again similar to the description of the New Jerusalem, in which we see the tree of life bearing 12 different fruits and leaves with healing properties ([Revelation 22:2](#)). According to [Zechariah 14:8](#), the river will split, part of it flowing west to the Mediterranean and the other part flowing east to the Dead Sea. Ezekiel goes on to describe the effect of this river on the Dead Sea, which will spring forth with life and become a wonderful place to go fishing.

Besides the literal application, there is a wonderfully symbolic picture in all this. Again, the river represents the outflowing of the Holy Spirit, bringing life to the lifeless. In the fruitful, medicinal trees we may see God's Spirit working in and through the lives of His righteous servants. For not only are the righteous to partake of the tree of life, they are in a sense to be trees of life themselves. Nourished by the stream of Holy Spirit, they are to produce godly fruit and be a life-giving blessing to others. A godly person who continually meditates on and lives according to God's law is "like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth its fruit in its season, whose leaf also shall not wither; and whatever he does shall prosper" ([Psalm 1:3](#)).

Finally, Ezekiel is given the borders of the land. They actually correspond very closely to the borders defined by Moses in [Numbers 34:1-12](#).

Yet "this list of borders does not coincide with Israelite settlement in any period, but rather reflects the Egyptian province of Canaan, as defined in the Egyptian-Hittite treaty signed following the battle of Kadesh. These, then, were the borders of the Land of Canaan which the Israelite tribes found upon their arrival" (Yohanan Aharoni and Michael Avi-Yonah, *The Macmillan Bible Atlas*, 1968, p. 41). "Ezekiel

'modernized' them by working into his description contemporary geographical names, including several of the Babylonian provinces of his day" (p. 106).

Apparently, God will give the Israelites all of the land He originally intended they should have. It differs from both the ancient and modern borders primarily by including the area of Lebanon and southwestern Syria. Also interesting to note in this passage is that the Promised Land will be for the Israelites "and for the strangers who dwell among you" ([Ezekiel 47:22](#)).

Ezekiel 48: Although Ezekiel is given a list of the tribes who receive their inheritance, elsewhere he says they would receive it by lot ([Ezekiel 47:22](#)), probably referring to the distribution of the land within each tribe. God says Joseph is to receive two portions ([Ezekiel 47:13](#)), to keep the number of inheriting tribes at 12, even though Levi is not to receive a normal inheritance. As shown on the accompanying map, seven of the tribes are given land north of the temple while the remaining five tribes are south of it.

Between Judah on the north and Benjamin on the south is the 25,000-cubit- (10-mile-) wide strip of land we first saw in chapter 45, apparently stretching all the way from the Mediterranean Sea to the Jordan River/Dead Sea border. The east and west portions of this strip are for the prince. But in the middle is the capital district, which is also 25,000 cubits long to form a square. All but a 5,000-cubit (2-mile) strip of this land is given to the priests and Levites, for their homes and towns and for the temple complex. But this chapter goes into a little more detail about the capital city itself, which will be located about three miles south of the temple complex, in this remaining 2 x 10-mile piece of land. That would put it about a mile northeast of Bethlehem.

The capital city occupies a 2 x 2-mile square in the center of the strip. The sides of the city proper are given as 4,500 cubits, surrounded by a

250-cubit easement (verses 16-17). This leaves two 2 x 4-mile stretches of land on either side of the city, described as the farmland for the workers of the city to grow their own food (verse 18-19). Inhabitants come from every tribe (verse 19). Three gates are on each of the four sides of the city, each one named for a different tribe (this time Joseph only receiving one gate). The New Jerusalem, beyond the Millennium, will have gates of pearl, precious foundation stones bearing the names of the 12 apostles and streets of gold ([Revelation 12:12-21](#)). Perhaps some of these features will be incorporated in the millennial Jerusalem as well.

Throughout these chapters, Ezekiel never actually mentions the name "Jerusalem." Other passages seem to indicate the area will still be called by its ancient name (e.g., Zechariah 14), but Ezekiel says it will receive another name at this time: *Yhwh Shammah* in Hebrew. This incredible name, meaning "The Lord Is There," implies that God is watching over this city to protect and bless it (compare [Ezekiel 35:10](#) with [Isaiah 33:20-21](#); see also [Jeremiah 3:17](#)).

While this concludes Ezekiel's grand vision of the future and provides a wonderful conclusion to his book, God gave him two last messages to record after this, as we will see in our next reading." [END]