

Study questions (Ezekiel)

1. What is the theme of Ezekiel?

Although God departed from the temple, the city, and the land and turned his people over to the sword of judgment in the hands of her national enemies for their sins, the Lord promises for his name's sake that Israel will return and her restoration will eventually so unfold in the distant future that the city of Jerusalem will have a new people, and a new temple that emerges with a new name "The Lord is there."

2. What are some reasons in support of the conclusion that Ezekiel's temple is not a symbolic description that is exhausted in the notion that the NT church is God's temple; nor does it describe a temple for sacrificing to be built after the second coming of Christ?

1) The death of Christ was once and for all (Heb. 10:18). It is a stretch to opt for sacrifices in a future temple that are memorials.

2) The heirs of the kingdom are no longer the Jewish nation but the Church, the new Israel (Matt. 21:43; 1 Pet. 2:9-10).

3) John adapts these chapters to the eternal state; there is no temple in the city; the city is the temple; the Lord is the temple, Rev. 21:9-22:6).

4) Hebrews 9 and what the true temple and holy places are: the heavenly, to which the earthly point. The earthly are not the reality, Christ is what the tabernacle and temple promised; they promised His work in heavenly places before the throne of the Father.

5) if we literalize land we must literalize David as king and the sanctuary of the future with its sacrifices. This is truly problematic and has to be in our minds as we look at Ezekiel's Temple.

6) In contrast to "present Jerusalem" in bondage, "Jerusalem above" is the new covenant that is like a barren woman with many children, the new covenant people of God (Gal 4.21-28; Isa 54.1-10). What is another name for the church: "The Lord is there." Should we not do with Ezekiel's promise what Paul does with Isaiah's?

7) Note the inseparability of the return to the land, the new covenant, the giving of a new heart, the coming of people from all nations by baptism into the new covenant community (Ezek 36.24-26; Heb 10.21-25).

8) Note the inseparability of return to the land with David as king and with God's sanctuary in their midst forever (Ezek 37.21, 24, 26-27) in relation to with city the fathers anticipated, the land of promise, that is, the better country, a heavenly one where God is called their God (Heb 11.9, 13-16). Thus, NT believers have come to Mount Zion and the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to Jesus (Heb 12.22, 24).

Thus, Israel becomes not my people (blended into the nations in exile) and her return to the land is to the better country, the heavenly one (cf. how Paul and Peter apply Hosea to the present church (Rom 9.24-26; 1 Pet 2.9-10 with exile language being applied to the new Israel, 1.1, 17 and the house of God refers to the people, 2.5).