

EZEKIEL – WHAT FUTURE TEMPLE

Introduction

For a long time I have found the temple described by the prophet Ezekiel troublesome. The crux of my problem was in believing this temple was futuristic. Such a temple as that described by Ezekiel does not fit with my eschatological understanding. Believing in a Mashiach that atoned for my sins and that with His sacrifice atonement was complete, did not correlate with a future temple that included equipment for sin and guilt offerings (Ezek.40:39). What is more the people living in the Land in the Millennium will have rejuvenated bodies, spirits and hearts, they will be incapable of sin. What is more there are aspects of the temple described in Ezekiel that do not fit the millennial picture painted by Scripture and other none canonical literature.

In my search I came across an article by Mathew Nolan specifically dealing with the book of Ezekiel which provided an answer to my dilemma and this study is based on his article. However, I have added my own comments where I felt it was advantageous to do so and must therefore take responsibility for this presentation.

Ezekiel – Not a Book

Given within Ezekiel is a definitive time line which is generally overlooked but which is critical to understanding the prophet. The information is compiled within thirteen separate scrolls as tabulated below each scroll is affixed to king Jehoiachin's years in exile, (Ezek.1:2). King Jehoiachin was in exile 37 years (2Kings 25:27).

Scroll No	Location	Date			Synopsis
		Year	Month	Day	
	1:2-3	5	?	5	Third Person Introduction
1	8:1 - 19:14	6	6	5	YHWH showing Ezekiel the crimes of Israel and Y'hudah
2	20:1 - 23:49	7	5	10	Ezekiel to tell Israel they must acknowledge their guilt
3	24:1 - 25:17	9	10	10	Proclamation against the nations
4	29:1-16	10	10	12	Proclamation against Egypt
5	26:1 - 28:26	11	1	1	Proclamation against Tyre
6	30:20-26	11	1	7	Proclamation against Pharaoh
7	31:1-18	11	3	1	Egypt brought to ruin
8	32:17 - 33:20	12	?	15	Egypt sent to the pit
9	32.1: - 32.:16	12	12	1	Lamentation for Egypt
10	33:21 - 39:29	12	10	5	Fall of Yerushalayim (Jerusalem)
		↑ 13 yrs ↓			Why a 13 year gap? Was YHWH giving Israel time to digest the information contained in the previous scrolls?
11	40:1 - 48:35	25	10	4	Temple scroll - Refer to commentary
12	29:17 - 30:19	27	1	1	Babylon will plunder Egypt
13	1:01 - 7:27	30	4	5	Refer to commentary

Commentary

The order in which Elohim gave Ezekiel the information is defined by the year/month/day in that sequence. As is seen this sequence is far removed from the order of the chapters presented in Ezekiel.

The scrolls depict the several meetings Ezekiel had with the elders of the people in obedience to YHWH's instructions. From the above you will see that chapter 1 verses 2-3 are not part of the scrolls. These two

verses are an interjection disturbing the flow of the information between verse 1 and 4 *et seq.* An examination of these two verses shows that they were written by someone other than Ezekiel: they are written in the third person and provide the starting date of Ezekiel’s visions from Elohim. Thus they serve as an introduction and are not part of the revelations given to the prophet.

Anomaly with scrolls 8, 9 and 10

Remembering that the dating is associated with king Jehoiachin’s years in exile, the dating of scroll 10 is incorrect. Historical records show King Jehoiachin came to the throne in 598 BCE but only reigned as king in the land for three months and was then taken to Babylon. As the fall off Yerushalayim was 587 BCE this would put scroll 10 in year 11 of the king’s exile and not year 12 as described in Ezekiel.

In fact the anomaly spreads across scrolls 8, 9 & 10 because depending upon the translation used, the dates of these three scrolls can read as either the eleventh year or twelfth year. For example, the Aramaic Peshitta has year 11 for each of scrolls 8, 9 &10. It is plausible that a copying error occurred with the dating of scroll 10 but is such a repetition of the same error plausible?

The confusion is further exacerbated with the LXX inferring month 1 for scroll 8. If this is correct scroll 8 would have to be year 12 as it could not occur before scroll 7 and the event described in scroll 10 would have occurred before scroll 8. Incidentally, the 1851 Benton’s English Septuagint concurs with the LXX dating. So if we put all of this together the following sequence is possible,

Scroll No	Location	Date			Synopsis
		Year	Month	Day	
7	31:1-18	11	3	1	Egypt brought to ruin
10	33:21 - 39:29	11	10	5	Fall of Yerushalayim (Jerusalem)
8	32:17 - 33:20	12	1	15	Egypt sent to the pit
9	32.1: - 32.:16	12	12	1	Lamentation for Egypt

We know that the fall of Yerushalayim was after the fall of Egypt but it is acceptable to slot scroll 10 between scrolls 7 and 8? Whilst I personally think the above is the most acceptable because it represents the least errors – the only error being the dating of scroll 10. Also it is immaterial whether we believe the LXX or not.

Scroll 11 – The Temple Scroll

When we examine the earlier scrolls we see that the prophet was in regular conversation with the elders of the people but then there is a 14 year gap (after date correction) before he delivers the next message from YHWH, why is this? Let us examine some verses from chapter 43,

So the spirit took me up, and brought me into the inner court; and, behold, the glory of YHWH filled the house. And I heard him speaking unto me out of the house; and the man stood by me. And he said unto me, Son of man, the place of my throne, and the place of the soles of my feet, where I will dwell in the midst of the children of Israel for ever, and my holy name, shall the house of Israel no more defile, neither they, nor their kings, by their whoredom, nor by the carcasses of their kings in their high places. (Ezek.43:5-7)

Now let them put away their whoredom, and the carcasses of their kings, far from me, and I will dwell in the midst of them for ever. Thou son of man, shew the house to the house of Israel, that they may be ashamed of their iniquities: and let them measure the pattern. (Ezek.43:9-10)

Here we have YHWH offering the people a rejuvenated life with Him living amongst them in a new temple but for this they must admit their sins, be filled with remorse and repent. It was an offer of restoration but the people did not accept YHWH’s offer so the restoration with its temple never happened, instead we

have the punishment described in the last scroll, scroll 13. The fact that we have a further scroll of wrath is clear that YHWH's offer of a rejuvenated lifestyle and its temple were rejected and now the offer is history.

Scroll 13

The opening chapter of this scroll describes the Heavenly throne of YHWH revealed to the prophet with the remaining six chapters vividly detailing the punishment YHWH will hand to the people and the city. YHWH's annoyance is plain: they refused His offer causing Him to withdraw it; it now takes six chapters for Him to describe the resulting punishment He will bring upon them.

Conclusion

The temple was an integral part of YHWH's offer of restoration, that offer was refused thus it was withdrawn and replaced by wrath. The offer has gone it is dead and buried along with its temple.

We can say this with confidence because the temple shown to Ezekiel had provision for sin offerings; Ezek.42:13, 43:19, 22, which conflicts with the words by the writer of Hebrews,

For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified. The Holy Spirit also assures us of this, for he said: "This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my laws in their hearts and will write them on their minds, and I will never again remember their sins and their lawless deeds." Now where there is forgiveness of these sins, there is no longer any offering for sin. (Heb.10:14-18).

When Mashiach returns He will be coming in His role as Malkitzedek high priest and He will institute the return to the Malkitzedek order.¹ There is no mention of any temple associated with the Malkitzedek priesthood and it is questionable what purpose a temple will serve when Mashiach is living physically in the land. What is more, Jeremiah chapter 3 describes the return to the land by YHWH's remnant: verse 16 says there will be no need for an 'ark of the covenant' why? Because YHWH's Torah will be in their hearts (Jer.31:31-35). YHWH will give this remnant a rejuvenated spirit.² If there is no ark, there is no need for an 'Especially Holy Place' as is described in Ezekiel's temple in chapter 41. It was the 'Book of the Law' that introduced the Levitical order under the Aharonic priesthood which required a temple system of worship and the 'Book of the Law' was an interim measure imposed on the people as a result of the golden calf incident.

Whilst it is accepted that not much of the information contained in the Scriptures is presented in a lineal/ sequential order which is the crux of this article, this argument collapses when the it is realised that the above content is substantiated by other credible sources. For further proof that there will be no temple in the millennium read the separate article 'Tribulation, Wrath and After - Part 2' found in End Times Articles. This article provides absolute proof that there cannot be a temple in Yerushalayim throughout the millennium and serves as a complement to this article.

Clifford Fearnley 2016

¹ Refer to the separate article 'Under Covenant or Under Law' found on www.undertorah.com

² Refer to the separate article 'A Rapture – To Be Or Not To Be' found on www.undertorah.com