

Ezekiel –The Temple Service

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The New Temple is all about “Holiness”. God will teach humanity “Holiness” starting with New Israel. **YHWH extends “Holiness” to the Temple by his presence** (Ez43:4-5). God’s purpose for the Temple Service is to teach. Priests and Levites will perform the Temple Service (Ez44:11,15a,23). The “Prince” has significant responsibilities (Ez45:17a). **The Teaching of the Temple is all about “Holiness”** (Ez43:12).

The Glory of the YHWH Fills the Temple: God’s presence will definitely be in the New Temple (Ez43:1-5, Ex40:34-35a, 1Kg8:11). **YHWH will inhabit the Most Holy Place.** The New Temple will be YHWH’s permanent home (Ez43:6-9).

Priests and Levites: The New Priesthood will look to Zadok as its eponymous ancestor (Ez44:15-19). **“The Levitical priests, the sons of Zadok** shall come near to me to minister to me.” The Levites are responsible for the whole Temple Area outside the Inner Court (Ez44:10-14, 46:24). **“The Levites** shall be ministers in my sanctuary having oversight at the gates - they shall stand before the people, to minister to them.”

Who is the “Prince”? The land allocated to the “Prince” is for agricultural purpose (Ez45:17a). The “Prince” is an observer of Priestly activities (Ez46:1-2). Only officiating priests are allowed in Inner Court. On Sabbath and New Moon, the east gate of the Inner Court is opened. The “Prince” enters from the Outer Court and sits in the vestibule of the gate to observe the Priestly activities. The gate remains open all day (Ez46:3). The “Prince” is one of the common people (Ez46:9-10). The “Prince” has family (Ez46:16). **The “Prince” is a human being with special responsibilities.**

The Sacrificial Service: The heart of the Temple is the altar of sacrifices in the center of the Inner Court. The sacrifices are processed in the Inner Court to the north of the altar (Ez40:35a,38-43). The chambers labeled “G” off the Inner Court, and the chambers labelled “F” at the back of the Inner Court, are used by the Priests (Ez40:44-46, 42:13-14a, 46:19-20). There will be **a regular morning sacrifice** (Ez46:13-15). There is NO mention of an evening sacrifice – Christ died at the time of the evening sacrifice. There will be a **yearly atonement ceremony for the Temple** (Ez45:18-20). All the **Holydays** will have **special sacrifices** (Ez45:21-25, 46:11). There is **no “lamb” at Passover** – Christ was the “Lamb”.

Responsibilities of the Prince: The primary responsibility of the Prince is the **provision of animals, grain, and oil for all the ongoing Temple Sacrifices** (Ezekiel 46:4-7, 45:17). The people of Israel are required to provide to the prince animals, grain, and oil for the sacrificial service (Ezekiel 45:13-16). The Prince is to **serve as an example ruler** for the rest of the world to emulate (Ezekiel 45:8b, 46:18, 45:9-12).

The Role of the Priests: The Zadokite Priesthood will fulfill **the charge originally given to Aaron** (Lv10:10-11). The Priests are given no permanent lands (Ez44:28-31). Specific prescriptions and proscriptions are basically excerpted from the **Writings of Moses** (Ez44:20-27).

An Object Lesson in Holiness: YHWH alludes to obscure historical events to contrast the “Holiness” required (Ez44:4-5a,6-7a,7b-8). The Temple was defiled several times – the worst being under Ahaz and Manasseh. **The whole Temple Area is declared to be “Holy”** (Ez42:15,20, 43:12, 44:1-3). The lands allocated to the Levites and Priests remain YHWH’s Holy Possession (Ez48:13-14). **Not even the “Prince” can violate the Holiness of the Inner Court** (Ez46:2a, 8, 12a). Some contend that the Prince is performing his own sacrifice, but the text is clear that the Priest does the sacrifice. People from all over the world will come to Jerusalem to learn about “Holiness” from the Temple and from the Temple Service (Micah 4:1-2). **To enter the Temple Area will require conversion** (Ez44:9).

The River of Life: Ezekiel’s vision ends with the same image as The Apostle John reports (Rv22:1-2). **The whole world will be healed, physically and spiritually, from the New Temple** (Ez47:1,8-9,12).

Assessment of the Temple Service: New Israel will be a nation comprised of converted people – people learning to exemplify “holiness”. At the center of the New Israel will be the city of Jerusalem. North of the city of Jerusalem will be **the Temple, “the beating heart of the world”**: in the daily Temple service there will be depicted “holiness” through sacrifices which look back to the sacrifice of Jesus Christ as a memorial. The Way of God will be taught from the Temple – teaching the whole world “holiness”. The whole new nation of Israel will be a living example of how the nations of the world are to function. The nations will come up and learn the Way of God, and the peace of God will spread to the whole world – Isaiah 9:7a: **Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end ...**