

November 2–8: Ezekiel 1–3; 33–34; 36–37; 47, “A New Spirit Will I Put Within You”

Overview

In 597 B.C., King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon carried many people from the kingdom of Judah into captivity. Among them was Ezekiel, whom the Lord called to be a prophet five years later. In 587 B.C., the Babylonians destroyed Jerusalem and took many more people captive. Ezekiel continued to minister to the exiled Jews until approximately 570 B.C.

The Watchman on the Tower

Ezekiel is called to be a "watchman" for Israel.

Ezk 3:11,17

11 And go, get thee to them of the captivity, unto the children of thy people, and speak unto them, and tell them, Thus saith the Lord God; whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear.

17 Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me.

What was a watchman expected to do when he saw danger, and what does this teach us about Ezekiel's responsibility to Israel?

“The analogy of the watchman referred to the military watchman who had to stay awake and who faced execution if he failed to warn the city when the enemy appeared. Such a watchman was in jeopardy always: the enemy sought to destroy him to keep him from raising the warning and, if he did not raise the warning when it was needed, his life was in jeopardy at the hands of those he was responsible to warn.” (Old Testament Student Manual: Kings-Malachi, pg. 267)

The Lord explains to Ezekiel that a watchman's responsibility is to sound the warning. If the people fail to heed the warning, they are responsible for their own choices.

Ezk 33:1-6

1 Again the word of the Lord came unto me, saying,

2 Son of man, speak to the children of thy people, and say unto them, When I bring the sword upon a land, if the people of the land take a man of their coasts, and set him for their watchman:

3 If when he seeth the sword come upon the land, he blow the trumpet, and warn the people;

4 Then whosoever heareth the sound of the trumpet, and taketh not warning; if the sword come, and take him away, his blood shall be upon his own head.

5 He heard the sound of the trumpet, and took not warning; his blood shall be upon him. But he that taketh warning shall deliver his soul.

6 But if the watchman see the sword come, and blow not the trumpet, and the people be not warned; if the sword come, and take any person from among them, he is taken away in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at the watchman's hand.

What do these verses teach us about the responsibility of a watchman to warn the people and the consequences of failing to do so?

(when he seeth the sword come upon the land, he blow the trumpet, and warn the people)

Joseph Smith

"If the master of that house give consent, the Elder may preach to his family, his wife, his children and his servants, his man-servants, or his maid-servants, or his slaves; then it should be the duty of the Elder to stand up boldly for the cause of Christ, and warn that people with one accord to repent and be baptized for the remission of sins, and for the Holy Ghost." (TPJS, pg. 88)

Ezk 33:7-9

7 ¶ So thou, O son of man, I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel; therefore thou shalt hear the word at my mouth, and warn them from me.

8 When I say unto the wicked, O wicked man, thou shalt surely die; if thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand.

9 Nevertheless, if thou warn the wicked of his way to turn from it; if he do not turn from his way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul.

What responsibility did the Lord place on Ezekiel as a watchman, and what would happen if he failed to warn the people?

(if thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand)

Spencer W. Kimball

"I am sure that Peter and James and Paul found it unpleasant business to constantly be calling people to repentance and warning them of dangers, but they continued unflinchingly, and so we, your leaders today, must be everlastingly at it; if young people do not understand, then the fault may be partly ours. But if we make the true way clear to them, then we are blameless.... That, of course, is why we, the watchmen, your leaders, are so interested and so intent upon letting the warning be trumpeted loud and long—so that no young person and trip himself and not be warned or wonder why we strive so hard to point the way." (BYU Speeches of the Year, Jan 5, 1965)

Jacob 1:17-19

17) Wherefore I, Jacob, gave unto them these words as I taught them in the temple, having first obtained mine errand from the Lord.

18) For I, Jacob, and my brother Joseph had been consecrated priests and teachers of this people, by the hand of Nephi.

19) And we did magnify our office unto the Lord, taking upon us the responsibility, answering the sins of the people upon our own heads if we did not teach them the word of God with all diligence; wherefore, by laboring with our might their blood might not come upon our garments; otherwise their blood would come upon our garments, and we would not be found spotless at the last day.

Whom has the Lord called to be spiritual watchmen for His people, and what can we learn from Ezekiel's calling about their responsibilities?

Ezra Taft Benson

As watchmen on the tower of Zion, it is our obligation and right as leaders to speak out against current evils—evils that strike at the very foundation of all we hold dear as the true church of Christ and as members of Christian nations....

Speaking out against immoral or unjust actions has been the burden of prophets and disciples of God from time immemorial. It was for this very reason that many of them were persecuted. Nevertheless, it was their God-given task, as watchmen on the tower, to warn the people.” (CR, Apr, 1973)

David A. Bednar

“I bear witness that parents... who invite children as gospel learners to act and not merely be acted upon will be blessed with eyes that can see afar off and with ears that can hear the sound of the trumpet. The spiritual discernment and inspiration you will receive... will enable you to stand as watchmen on the tower for your families—'watching ... with all perseverance' (Ephesians 6:18) to the blessing of your immediate family and your future posterity.” (CR, April 2010)

D&C 88:81-82

81) Behold, I sent you out to testify and warn the people, and it becometh every man who hath been warned to warn his neighbor.

82) Therefore, they are left without excuse, and their sins are upon their own heads.

Keeping in mind the important role of the Lord's watchmen, let's read what the Lord has to say about false prophets.

Ezk 13:1-3,10,22

1 And the word of the Lord came unto me, saying,
2 Son of man, prophesy against the prophets of Israel that prophesy, and say thou unto them that prophesy out of their own hearts, Hear ye the word of the Lord;
3 Thus saith the Lord GOD; Woe unto the foolish prophets, that follow their own spirit, and have seen nothing!

10 ¶ Because, even because they have seduced my people, saying, Peace; and there was no peace; and one built up a wall, and, lo, others daubed it with untempered mortar:

22 Because with lies ye have made the heart of the righteous sad, whom I have not made sad; and strengthened the hands of the wicked, that he should not return from his wicked way, by promising him life:

How do the teachings of false prophets affect both the righteous and the wicked?

(that prophesy out of their own hearts
they have seduced my people, saying, Peace; and there was no peace
with lies ye have made the heart of the righteous sad
and strengthened the hands of the wicked)

Temples at the Time of the Gathering

As did other prophets of his time, Ezekiel prophesied of the latter-day gathering of Israel.

Ezk 36:24-28

24 For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land.

25 ¶ Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you.

26 A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh.

27 And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.

28 And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God.

What spiritual blessings does the Lord promise to give His people as He gathers them in the latter days?

(ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness... will I cleanse you
A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you)

What do these verses teach us about what we must do to allow the Lord to cleanse us, change our hearts, and place His Spirit within us?

D. Todd Christofferson

"In all the ordinances, especially those of the temple, we are endowed with power from on high. This 'power of godliness' comes in the person and by the influence of the Holy Ghost. The gift of the Holy Ghost is part of the new and everlasting covenant.... It is the messenger of grace by which the blood of Christ is applied to take away our sins and sanctify us." (CR, April 2009)

Ezk 37:26-28

26 Moreover I will make a covenant of peace with them; it shall be an everlasting covenant with them: and I will place them, and multiply them, and will set my sanctuary in the midst of them for evermore.

27 My tabernacle also shall be with them: yea, I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

28 And the heathen shall know that I the Lord do sanctify Israel, when my sanctuary shall be in the midst of them for evermore.

What does the Lord promise will be in the midst of His people in the latter days, and what will this reveal to the world?

(it shall be an everlasting covenant with them... and will set my sanctuary in the midst of them for evermore.

My tabernacle also shall be with them)

Bruce R. McConkie

"'My tabernacle also shall be with them: yea, I will be their God, and they shall be my people.' How sweet and lovely is this thought! When the Lord's true tabernacle is with men; when they assemble therein to worship the Father, in the name of the Son, by the power of the Holy Spirit; when their lives at long last conform to the divine will and pattern-then they are his people and he is their God." (The Millennial Messiah: The Second Coming of the Son of Man, pg. 608)

What do these verses teach us about the relationship between the gathering of Israel and the building of temples?

Joseph Smith

"What was the object of gathering the Jews, or the people of God in any age of the world?...

"The main object was to build unto the Lord a house whereby He could reveal unto His people the ordinances of His house and the glories of His kingdom, and teach the people the way of salvation; for there are certain ordinances and principles that, when they are taught and practiced, must be done in a place or house built for that purpose." (HC, 5:422-423)

The Millennial Temple in Jerusalem

Remember that Solomon's temple had recently been destroyed. Ezekiel chapters 40–42 describe a vision of a future temple that will be built in Jerusalem during the Millennium.

Ezk 40:3-4

3 And he brought me thither, and, behold, there was a man, whose appearance was like the appearance of brass, with a line of flax in his hand, and a measuring reed; and he stood in the gate.

4 And the man said unto me, Son of man, behold with thine eyes, and hear with thine ears, and set thine heart upon all that I shall shew thee; for to the intent that I might shew them unto thee art thou brought hither: declare all that thou seest to the house of Israel.

Why was Ezekiel shown this vision, and what was he instructed to do with what he saw?

(for to the intent that I might shew them unto thee art thou brought hither: declare all that thou seest to the house of Israel)

Ezk 43:10-12

10 ¶ 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.

11 And if they be ashamed of all that they have done, shew them the form of the house, and the fashion thereof, and the goings out thereof, and the comings in thereof, and all the forms thereof, and all the ordinances thereof, and all the forms thereof, and all the laws thereof: and write it in their sight, that they may keep the whole form thereof, and all the ordinances thereof, and do them.

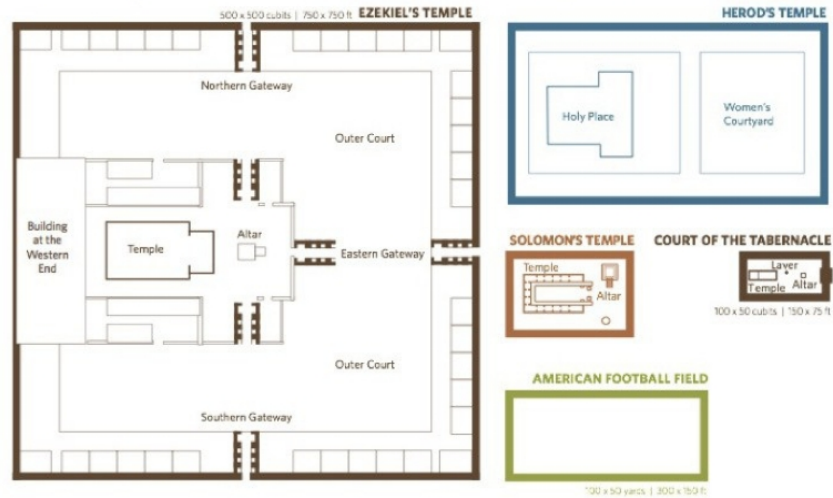
12 This is the law of the house; Upon the top of the mountain the whole limit thereof round about shall be most holy. Behold, this is the law of the house.

What did the Lord hope Israel would understand and do as they learned about the future temple?

(shew the house to the house of Israel, that they may be ashamed of their iniquities)



Temple Size Comparisons



Standard for Latter-Day Temples

Ezekiel is taught about some of the work that will be performed in the temple. Let's read how these teachings can apply to latter-day temples today.

Ezk 43:4-7

4 And the glory of the Lord came into the house by the way of the gate whose prospect is toward the east.

5 So the spirit took me up, and brought me into the inner court; and, behold, the glory of the Lord filled the house.

6 And I heard him speaking unto me out of the house; and the man stood by me.

7 ¶ 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 carcases of their kings in their high places.

What do these verses teach us about the Lord's presence in His temples and how we should treat these sacred places?

(the glory of the Lord filled the house.

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)

- Each temple has a plaque that reads: Holiness to the Lord. The House of the Lord

The messenger showed Ezekiel how the priests were to prepare for and properly perform their duties in the temple. Consider how these instructions can also apply to the work performed in every temple.

Ezk 44:4-5

4 ¶ Then brought he me the way of the north gate before the house: and I looked, and, behold, the glory of the Lord filled the house of the Lord: and I fell upon my face.

5 And the Lord said unto me, Son of man, mark well, and behold with thine eyes, and hear with thine ears all that I say unto thee concerning all the ordinances of the house of the Lord, and all the laws thereof; and mark well the entering in of the house, with every going forth of the sanctuary.

What are Church leaders commanded to do before allowing individuals to participate in temple ordinances?

(mark well the entering in of the house, with every going forth of the sanctuary)

Boyd K. Packer

“You must possess a current recommend to be admitted to the temple. This recommend must be signed by the proper officers of the Church. Only those who are worthy should go to the temple. Your local bishop or branch president has the responsibility of making inquiries into your personal worthiness. This interview is of great importance, for it is an occasion to explore with an ordained servant of the Lord the pattern of your life. If anything is amiss in your life, the bishop will be able to help you resolve it. Through this procedure, as you counsel with the common judge in Israel, you can declare or can be helped to establish your worthiness to enter the temple with the Lord’s approval.” (“The Holy Temple,” Ensign, Feb. 1995)

D&C 97:15-16

15) And inasmuch as my people build a house unto me in the name of the Lord, and do not suffer any unclean thing to come into it, that it be not defiled, my glory shall rest upon it;

16) Yea, and my presence shall be there, for I will come into it, and all the pure in heart that shall come into it shall see God.

Notice how the priests were commanded to dress in the temple and how these instructions parallel what we are required to do today.

Ezk 44:17-19

17 ¶ And it shall come to pass, that when they enter in at the gates of the inner court, they shall be clothed with linen garments; and no wool shall come upon them, whiles they minister in the gates of the inner court, and within.

18 They shall have linen bonnets upon their heads, and shall have linen breeches upon their loins; they shall not gird themselves with any thing that causeth sweat.
19 And when they go forth into the utter court, even into the utter court to the people, they shall put off their garments wherein they ministered, and lay them in the holy chambers, and they shall put on other garments; and they shall not sanctify the people with their garments.

What do the priests' garments teach us about the purity associated with temple service and the sacred nature of clothing worn in the temple?

Notice how these verses correspond with what we learn in the temple today.

Ezk 44:23-24

23 And they shall teach my people the difference between the holy and profane, and cause them to discern between the unclean and the clean.

24 And in controversy they shall stand in judgment; and they shall judge it according to my judgments: and they shall keep my laws and my statutes in all mine assemblies; and they shall hallow my sabbaths.

What do these verses teach us that we can learn and discern through the teachings of the temple?

(the difference between the holy and profane, and cause them to discern between the unclean and the clean)

Waters Issue from the Temple

Ezekiel was brought to the door of the temple, where he saw in vision a river flowing eastward from the temple.

Notice that at each thousand cubits from the temple, the river flowing from beneath the temple becomes deeper and wider.

Ezk 47:1-5

1 Afterward he brought me again unto the door of the house; and, behold, waters issued out from under the threshold of the house eastward: for the forefront of the house stood toward the east, and the waters came down from under from the right side of the house, at the south side of the altar.

2 Then brought he me out of the way of the gate northward, and led me about the way without unto the utter gate by the way that looketh eastward; and, behold, there ran out waters on the right side.

3 And when the man that had the line in his hand went forth eastward, he measured a thousand cubits, and he brought me through the waters; the waters were to the ankles.

4 Again he measured a thousand, and brought me through the waters; the waters were to the knees. Again he measured a thousand, and brought me through; the waters were to the loins.

5 Afterward he measured a thousand; and it was a river that I could not pass over: for the waters were risen, waters to swim in, a river that could not be passed over.



What can we learn from the way the river flowing from the temple becomes deeper and wider as it moves farther from the temple?

Dale G. Renlund

“Ezekiel sees a river that increases as it flows from the house. The water that’s moving forth from the temple represents blessings which flow from the temples to heal families and give them life. The growth of the river is similar to the exponential growth of our family through the generations. The blessings of the temple are available to everything and everyone....

“The river will grow as you continue to perform this work and teach others to do the same. You’ll find not only protection from the temptation and ills of this world, but you’ll also find personal power, power to change, power to repent, power to learn, power to be sanctified, and power to turn the hearts of your family together and heal that which needs healing.” (“Family History and Temple Blessings”, Ensign, Feb 2017)

Ezekiel is taught about the healing power of the river, both literally and symbolically.

Ezk 47:6-9,12

6 ¶ And he said unto me, Son of man, hast thou seen this? Then he brought me, and caused me to return to the brink of the river.

7 Now when I had returned, behold, at the bank of the river were very many trees on the one side and on the other.

8 Then said he unto me, These waters issue out toward the east country, and go down into the desert, and go into the sea: which being brought forth into the sea, the waters

shall be healed.

9 And it shall come to pass, that every thing that liveth, which moveth, whithersoever the rivers shall come, shall live: and there shall be a very great multitude of fish, because these waters shall come thither: for they shall be healed; and every thing shall live whither the river cometh.

12 And by the river upon the bank thereof, on this side and on that side, shall grow all trees for meat, whose leaf shall not fade, neither shall the fruit thereof be consumed: it shall bring forth new fruit according to his months, because their waters they issued out of the sanctuary: and the fruit thereof shall be for meat, and the leaf thereof for medicine.

What happens to the land, the water, and everything the river touches as it flows from the temple?

(every thing that liveth, which moveth, whithersoever the rivers shall come, shall live... for they shall be healed; and every thing shall live whither the river cometh)

Dale G. Renlund

“The river renewed everything that it touched. The blessings of the temple likewise have a stunning capacity to heal. Temple blessings can heal hearts and lives and families” (CR, April 2018)

Revelation 22:1-2

1) And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.

2) In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.

What do the trees along the river teach us about the life and healing that come from God?

(on either side of the river, was there the tree of life... and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations)

We have considered the symbolic representation of the tree. Now let's read what Joseph Smith taught about the literal healing power of this river.

Joseph Smith

“Judah must return, Jerusalem must be rebuilt, and the temple, and water come out from under the temple, and the waters of the Dead Sea be healed. It will take some time to rebuild the walls of the city and the temple, ... and all this must be done before the Son of Man will make His appearance” (TPJS, pg. 286)

What does Joseph Smith teach us about the literal healing power of the river that will flow from the temple?

- The river is not only a symbolic representation of the temple and the gospel; there will also be a literal river flowing from the temple that will heal the land and the Dead Sea.