

Lesson # 70 Worship in the Millennial Kingdom

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I. Introduction

It would be easy and natural to assume that, with Jesus in the midst of His people & ruling from a royal, Jerusalem throne, that the necessity of formal worship might be ended. After all, if the Millennium is a restoration of an Edenic paradise, there is no record of formal worship by Adam and Eve in the original Eden – only walks with God in “the cool of the day”.

Yet there passages that foretell of the worship that will take place on earth during Christ’s 1,000 year reign, and some of it is detailed and explicit. We’ve seen the numerous scenes in heaven throughout Revelation that paint pictures of heavenly worship, and these OT passages tell us to expect earthly worship as well in the Kingdom.

In **Isa. 35:8-10** & **60:3-7**, we have the redeemed coming to Zion – singing, bringing treasures to Christ with everlasting joy and to obtain gladness and joy, bringing gold and frankincense (60:6), and significantly, no Myrrh; to His altar and Christ is being exalted. Haggai 2:8-9 tells about “this house I will fill with glory, says the Lord of Hosts”, and “in this place He will give peace.” ①

Zech. 14:4-11 describes the return of Christ to Jerusalem and the geographical, geological changes that will take place that day. Earlier, in **Zech. 8:20-23**, the desire of the people of the Millennial Kingdom will be to go to Jerusalem to see Christ and to entreat His favour – v. 23 being very graphic of the desire to go and of the reversed fortunes of Jewish believers. Then Zech. **14:16-21** offers the most succinct view of Kingdom worship. Let’s look at that a bit closer.

II. The Compulsion to Worship at Jerusalem

Zech. 14:16-21

This brief passage seems to indicate one central place to worship and once again, as it was in OT times and during the gospels, it is Jerusalem where this ‘house’ that God has promised to bring great glory that everyone streams to in order to celebrate feasts (ie. v. 16 – the “feast of Booths” which was a fall feast.

In Psalm 72:1-20, David describes a king whose rule and reign goes far beyond what David would anticipate for his son Solomon (for the whom the psalm is ostensibly written), and can only be referring to this future time of the Millennial Kingdom. Notice:

- v. 7 – peace will abound until the moon is no more

- v. 8 - The dominion of the kingdom is from sea to sea ...to the ends of the earth; cf. Daniel 4:34-35 & 7:13-14
- vv. 9-10 – kings and nations bring gifts
- v. 11 – kings fall down and serve him
- vv. 12-13 – delivers the needy
- v. 15 – prayer is made for Him daily
- v. 16 – an abundance of grain
- v. 17 – His name endures forever / people are blessed in Him
- v. 19 – Blessed be His glorious name forever.

In Zech. 14:8, living waters will flow out of Jerusalem, ½ to the east, and ½ to the west, with Jerusalem being the highest point on the earth. Recall that Rev. 6:14 (6th Seal); 16:19-20 (7th Bowl) mention these geological changes. The world is flattened as Jerusalem rises so that this mountain overshadows every other hill in the world.

Zech. 14:16 – the survivors, the saved ones that is, (or representatives of them) will go up year after year to worship this King, the Lord of Hosts, Jesus Christ and to keep the Feast of Boothsⁱ - a commemorative of the wilderness wanderings by the Jews. What is odd is v. 17 – that any who choose not to comply with this (which means it must be a command) will suffer the loss of rain. It then specifies Egypt (v. 18) and other nations (v. 19) to show that God intends the punishment for this perceived lack of willingness to worship Christ to be specific only to those who refuse to comply. It will not be like it is now, when evil may befall us in a judgment and even believers are adversely affected. Truly, the world will be ruled with a rod of iron – cf. Ps. 2:7ff & Ps. 89:20-37. ②

Zech. 14:20 – describes a time when even the most common items are dedicated to God's glory – bells on horses, pots & pans, and v. 21, all who sacrifice will come and eat from these holy pots and boil the meat of the sacrifice in them. So there will be sacrifices of meat, but it will be boiled rather than roasted in fire. Furthermore, v. 21 says that no trader will be in God's house, as compared to the gospels when on two occasions (LK 19:45-46; MT. 21:12-13; JN 2:13-17; MK 11:15-18), Jesus angrily cleared the temple courts of the merchants, quoting **Isa. 56:5-7** as He did so.

Finally, this house will be a house of prayer, undisturbed by the evil plans of man. It is to a description of this temple that we now turn.

III. The Millennial Temple Ezekiel 40-48

Quite obviously, we could spend weeks looking at these 9 chapters, but instead, we will stick to simply trying to hit the highlights and to summarize what this section of Ezekiel is all about.

The temple is the underlying theme of the book of Ezekiel. In the early chapters of the book, he shows how God's glory and presence left the temple – a gradual,

yet unnoticed exodus – cf. Ezek. 9:3 – to the threshold; 10:4 – over the threshold; 10: 18 – over the cherubim; & 11:22-23 – over the mountain east of the city. The amazing aspect of this is that the priests and people did not even know that God was gone from their midst because they were so spiritually dull. This was part of God’s judgment against Israel because of their rampant idolatry.

The restoration of Israel is described in prophetic, almost apocalyptic language – Ezek. 34:11-17 – as God beings to reveal how He will seek His lost sheep; judging some, saving others, not nationally, but personally – see 34:22-31. In chapter 36, there is an amazing description of how God saves the elect – 36:19-27 – and then, in chapter 37, the dry bones come to life. From individuals, we now see a revival of national Israel (vv. 1-14). God breathes life back into this nation that appeared to have died. Note also vv. 21-28.

Once Israel has been reestablished as a nation, Ezekiel 38-39 describes a Muslim attack against them that fails as God decimates the aggressors. As lesson # 41 describes, I believe this battle occurs concurrent with the rapture and this event is what brings the Antichrist to early prominence in the world, with the Tribulation about 3 years away. Ezekiel 39:21-29 sets the context for what follows in chapters 40-48 (esp. v. 28).

The description of the temple in chapters 40-48 is of something that is not found in Israel’s history. It goes far beyond the bounds of Solomon’s Temple and Herod’s, which was the rebuilt version of Solomon’s. Herod’s Temple was extant when Jesus was on the earth. ③

The most unique aspect of this temple now being described is that the glory of the Lord fills it – cf. Ezek. 43:5; 44:4 – which was not true of any temple between Ezek. 10:18 and now. God’s glory is never said to dwell in Herod’s Temple, and in fact, the Ark of the Covenant is not said to be in it, probably hidden away by Jeremiah to keep it from being captured & defiled in the attack described in II Chronicles 36. The Ark is also not mentioned in Ezekiel 40-48.

Rather than get bogged down in the copious detail of these chapters, many of which provide measurements of the temple, the Most Holy Place, the gates, the rooms, and divisions of the land among the tribes of Israel, the various offerings and feasts, I thought it would be more helpful to summarize what this is all about to examine the major viewpoints about it.

IV. Major Views of Ezekiel 40-48

There are 5 main interpretations of these 9 chapters, and I think we need to examine each on briefly.

i.) A Look Back – Solomon’s Temple

The captives who had been taken to Babylon remembered this great temple and wept. They recalled the glory days in Jerusalem, but their offspring, born in Babylon, had never seen it and felt no real connection to it. Therefore, some interpreters believe that Ezekiel wrote these chapters to capture a vivid image of the temple that had been left behind, in order to encourage them of God’s presence there.

However, there are problems with this view.

- The exilic prayers (ie. Dan. 9:3-19 which only refers to it) were for a future rebuilding of the temple. They wept over the loss of Solomon’s temple, but the only other reference to this is in Ezra 3:12-13, when they wept as they contrasted the rebuilt (and inferior) temple to Solomon’s earlier temple. See also Haggai 2:3.
- There were already preserved descriptions of Solomon’s Temple in Kings & Chronicles.
- This description does not describe Solomon’s Temple and deviates significantly in architecture, style, size and ceremony. This Ezekiel description is huge when compared to Solomon’s. Ezek. 48:9-10 – the sacred area for the temple is 25,000 cubits or 8.5 miles square! In 48:35, Jerusalem is 18,000 cubits or 6 miles, and in 42:20, the temple building is 500 cubits or the equivalent of 3 football fields.ⁱⁱ

ii.) Plans for the Post-Exilic Temple

A second viewpoint is that this is a blueprint for the Temple to be rebuilt at Jerusalem after the 70 years of exile (Dan. 29:2; II Chron. 36:21) are over and the captives are allowed to return to Jerusalem. As Ezekiel was also a priest in exile, they counted on his skills to provide the plans.

However, if this is the case, they failed miserably and Zerubbabel’s temple was a shrunken version of this plan, and none of the rebuilding even makes one reference to Ezekiel’s plan. Ezra, Nehemiah, Haggai – all had opportunity to tie this together, but none of them did. If the purpose of this prophecy was to provide architectural plans for the temple to be rebuilt immediately after the exile, it was never followed.ⁱⁱⁱ

If Ezekiel was with them in captivity, why ignore these plans unless they all knew this was not the plan for the immediate rebuild? On top of these facts, there are other things never followed up on.

- The land was never divided among the tribes and for “the prince”
- Many of Ezekiel’s instructions vary significantly from the Torah (ie. Ezek. 43:12), so is this a new Torah?
- There are also departures from the Mosaic law – there is no Ark of The Covenant within the Holy Place, no Table of Shewbread and no lampstand in the Holy Place, no anointing oil and no mention of the High Priesthood.

- The most compelling aspect is that God's Shekinah glory did not return to this temple and it is this glory that is the focal point of the temple described by Ezekiel!

iii.) Symbol of a Spiritual Reality

Non-futurists believe that Ezekiel's vision here is neither physical nor literal, but is symbolic, since it did not occur after the exile was over. However, Jesus' first advent did not fulfill every messianic prophecy either. Some prophecies related to His coming remain as yet unfulfilled and must take place in either the Millennium or the eternal state. To see Ezek. 40-48 as symbolic or spiritual only because it did not immediately occur is to ignore much of the futuristic tendencies of numerous OT prophecies.

Those who interpret this passage that way cannot agree on what the symbols mean. For example, it could mean the returned nation of Israel, Jesus, the Church, the community of all believers, new heaven and earth, heaven, etc. Furthermore, what does one do with the symbolism in countless verses giving specific, detailed measurements? Elwood McQuaid comments here; "I believe that the Ezekiel Temple is a literal temple that will be built during the millennial reign of Jesus Christ. One of the reasons is because the description that is given in the book of Ezekiel about this temple has aspects to it that were not resonant in any of the other temples: Solomon's Temple, Zerubabbel's Temple, nor the Herodian refurbishing of Zerubabbel's Temple. None of them had the dimensions and none of them lined up exactly. For that reason, among many others that could be mentioned, I think that without a doubt this is something that is in the future (as it is) unprecedented at any time in the past.^{iv}" ⑤

Nothing here remotely corresponds to the NT church, and if Ezekiel had intended to convey a symbolic or spiritual message through symbols, why do his 'symbols' deviate from forms of worship and service his readers would have understood?

Now that is not to say that there is no symbolism in Ezekiel. Note 1:4-28; 2:8-3:3 (he eats a scroll); 4:1-3 (writes on a bucket set up an iron plate); 4:4-8 (lies on his side); 4:9-15 (cooks strange bread); 5:1-4 (shaves his head & burns the hair); 12:1-7 (carries baggage); etc. Ezekiel was concerned in 20:49 that the people would miss the meanings of his symbols and be doomed, but later on (24:19) the people asked for the literal meanings. The absence of such language in chapters 40-48 intends for us to understand it literally.

iv.) Preview of the Eternal State

As part of the symbolic view, one viewpoint says this passage prefigures the eternal state of the righteous in heaven, based on parallels of some sections with passages in Rev. 21-22 as the New Jerusalem.

However, there are more differences than parallels. One city (Ezekiel's) is square, but the New Jerusalem is a cube built of precious stones, metals, pearls, etc. Compare Ezek. 40:47 to Rev. 21:16-22. Furthermore, Ezekiel's city has a central temple which dominates it, while the New Jerusalem has no temple (Rev. 22:21). Finally, the re-institution of blood sacrifices for atonement is an absolutely opposite contrast to anything in the eternal state, but matches many aspects of the Millennium. The similarities and contrasts to heaven if this is seen as a Millennial temple make sense if this is a preview of the Millennium, not heaven.

v.) The Promise of a Future Restoration Temple

This view makes the most sense of these 9 chapters. It sees this description of a temple to be built in the Millennial Kingdom as Christ reigns from Jerusalem after national Israel has been restored. Charles L. Feinberg comments, *“The concluding chapters of Ezekiel form a kind of continental divide in the area of biblical interpretation...it is one the areas where the literal interpretation of the Bible and the spiritualizing or allegorizing method diverge widely...When thirty-nine chapters can be treated detailedly (sic) & seriously as well as literally, there is no valid reason a priori for treating this large division of the book in an entirely different manner. There must be some compelling evidence that such a disclosure should be handled in such a way...The literal (view) declares that the prediction speaks of the restoration and establishment of the people of Israel in their own land in the last days of their national history, their conversion to the Lord through faith in their long-rejected Messiah, and the manifest presence and glory of the Lord in their midst.”*^v (ellipses are mine) ⑥

Here are 5 arguments supporting this fifth view^{vi}:

- a. The literary unity of Ezekiel requires that a literal temple be understood throughout the book

Without chapters 40-48, there is no answer given as to the outcome of Israel. There is no evidence of God's glory returning to the Israel, and no hope for the promised restoration of Israel in the future.

- b. The context of the Temple's restoration requires a literal interpretation

Jewish interpretations of these chapters have traditionally been the expectation of literal fulfillment, and Daniel anticipated at least 1 restored temple, which Antichrist would then desecrate when he came onto the scene. Daniel's prophecy of course is not referring to this temple)

- c. The description of the temple indicates it is to be a literal construction.

What impressions does the reader get when looking at verse after verse of precise, detailed measurements, land divisions, geographic locations, roles for worship participants to play, titles like the prince, priests, etc.? Literal.

- d. The eschatological interpretation of Ezekiel 40-48 is in harmony with other OT prophetic passages.

They are to understand the plans and build the temple when “they are ashamed of all they have done” (Ezek. 43:10-11) & cf. Zech. 12:10ff. Notice this comparative chart:

OT Prophecies of the Millennial Temple	Prophecies of Sacrifices in the MK Temple
Joel 3:18	Isa. 56:6-7
Isa. 2:3	Isa. 60:7
Isa. 60:13	Jer. 33:18
Dan. 9:24	Zech. 14:16-21
Hag. 2:7,9	

- e. The restoration of the Zadokite priesthood.

This is a very pertinent point, so we'll go into a bit more detail on it. Zadok was a Levite and the High Priest during the reign of David and Solomon – cf. I Kings 1:34. God promised him and his progeny an everlasting priesthood (I Sam. 2:35; I Kings 2:27,35). This reconfirmed earlier promises to ancestors Phineas (Num. 25:13) and Aaron (Ex. 2:9,9; 40:15). In fact, the Zadokite / Levitical priesthood ⑦ dominated until the Maccabean revolt (inter-testamental) when the Hasmonean dynasty appointed ‘political’ priests. The priests who served from that point on until AD 70 were not legitimate Zadokites, such as Annas & Caiaphas

Ezekiel links this as yet unfulfilled promise to Zedok with a future temple and priesthood by stating that Zadokite priests will minister in this Millennial Temple – cf. Ezek. 40:46; 44:15. Jeremiah also made the same connection and guaranteed that it would happen by comparing it to the perpetuity of earth's rotation – Jer. 33:17-22.

Those who spiritualize Ezekiel's prophecy of this future priesthood put in jeopardy the literal fulfillment of the Davidic line according to the link in Jeremiah 33 and relegate the Davidic Covenant to a spiritual rather than literal fulfillment, thus putting all Messianic prophecy on the line as well.^{vii}

This view makes the most sense of the five.

v. Sacrifices in the Temple – Blasphemy?

The “elephant in the room” so to speak regarding these 9 chapters is this: If Christ died as the Lamb of God and has thus atoned for the sins of His elect, has returned to setup His Millennial Kingdom & to reign for 1,000 years from

Jerusalem, why return to a Levitical system of worship (or something very close to it) where the practice of animal sacrifices is restored?

This is without a doubt the toughest issue I have had to wrestle with during my study of the end times. Even the explanations I've heard on this topic are not 100% convincing to me. So, how does this fit in? Is it for the Millennial Kingdom or for heaven, or is it symbolic of something else? One writer believed it was simply a dream of Ezekiel's recorded but never came to fruition. Is it possible that this is what God planned for Israel, but her rejection of the Messiah precluded it and God set it aside after having given it to Ezekiel to prophesy?

Edmund P. Clowney, a very capable and trusted theologian, says this, *“Jesus Christ is the only Mediator, His blood and sacrifice. There can be no going back. If there is a way back to the ceremonial law, to the types and shadows of what has now become the bondage of legalism, then Paul labored and ran in vain – more than that, Christ died in vain.”*^{viii}

John Schmitt, challenging Clowney's comment said, *“Is it heretical to believe that a temple and sacrifices will once again exist?...Ezekiel himself believed it was a reality and the future home of the Messiah. Then, it becomes not heresy to believe that a Temple and sacrifices will exist; rather it is almost heresy to not believe this, especially because it is part of God's infallible word. The burden on us is to determine how it fits – not its reality.”*^{ix}

We've seen the five scenarios and determined which one makes the most sense, but this aspect of it is a real conundrum. When the Herodian Temple was destroyed in AD 70 by the Romans, the Judaistic sacrificial system officially ended (though it was effectively ended when the veil was torn as Christ died) and it has not been restored since, so for almost 2,000 years, Judaism has been without a system of blood sacrifice – the very life blood of that system. Christianity is built on the fulfillment of that system – see Gal. 3:24 & the entire book of Hebrews – on the finished and complete sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ. Is a literal return to a Judaistic style sacrificial system to be considered a blessing or a curse or form of blasphemy? This is no small problem we have to deal with here in Ezek. 40-48, if we interpret these 9 chapters to be referring to a literal Millennial Temple as described.

As described, these chapters seem to indicate that Christianity will be set aside, even though Jesus Christ will reign personally on David's throne, so that animal sacrifice can be restarted. If so, what do we do with such passages as these? **Hebrews 7:18-28; 8:6-7,13; 9:11-15,23-28; 10:1-10,16; JN 1:29; Gal. 3:19-25; Col. 2:9-14;** etc.

Despite all these verses, Ezek. 40-48 does not appear to allow us to take it as anything but literally. All but 1 chapter of the 9 (47) makes at least 1 reference to the sacrificial system – “new moons”, sabbaths, appointed feasts, daily offerings, burnt offerings, grain offerings, blood sacrifices, an altar for incense and burnt offerings, places to boil sacrifices, a priesthood to offer the fat and

blood (Zadokites), Levites to slaughter the burnt offerings, and sin offerings (43:22,25-44), and to make atonement (43:20; 45:25). This cannot be incidental or symbolic only in my estimation. It is this very problem that forces many commentators to abandon a literal treatment of these chapters in favour of some sort of symbolism, so that not only are the priesthood and sacrifices symbolic, but therefore, so must be the temple.

I don't see how we can spiritualize away 9 chapters of very detailed information that rivals those passages in Exodus describing the building of the Tabernacle or those in II Chronicles 3ff where the detail of Solomon's Temple is laid out for us.

It is not just this lengthy passage in Ezekiel that deals with sacrifices in an eschatological sense either, as other prophets mention it as well: Isa. 56:6-7; 60:7; 66:20-21; Zech. 14:16-21; Haggai 2:7; Malachi 1:11; Jer. 33:14-23. Let's look at **Jer. 33:14-23** and note especially vv. 15-17.

This prophecy is of immense importance for a few reasons. It establishes that nothing can permanently take away Israel's relationship with God – even their rejection of His Son. David will have a son to sit on his throne (v. 17) and the Levitical priests will never lack a man in God's presence to “offer burnt offerings...sacrifices forever” (v. 18). Now, if you spiritualize this, you endanger the literal reign of God's Son, Jesus Christ, and if this is literal, then the Levitical priesthood cannot be symbolic. This passage appears to be a divine promise of literal fulfillment and that is what appears to be the case in Ezekiel 40-48 as well, but in much more detail. ⑨

Randall Price mentions, *“But was not Christ's sacrifice the end of all sacrifices? The answer to this requires us to consider the purpose of the OT sacrifices as well as the nature of Christ's redemptive work...However, whatever our conclusion for the present age, it should be remembered that “just because animal sacrifices and priests have no place in Christianity does not mean that they will have no place in Israel after the rapture of the church... The problem this statement raises is the failure to discern the distinction between the ages preceding and subsequent to the present age of grace.”*^x

Whereas the church age can be seen as a parenthesis – a period of time set apart from God's plans for Israel, where Jews and Gentiles alike are integrated into 1 community of believers, or 1 body of Christ (I Cor. 9:21; Gal. 6:2; Eph. 2:14-16), the Millennial Kingdom is an eschatological extension or renewal of the Jewish age which brings Gentiles into a worldwide Jewish economy. The church now serves as a spiritual temple (Eph. 2:21) including individuals who are also “temples (I Cor. 3:16; 6:19), with spiritual sacrifices (Rom. 12:1; Heb. 13:15-16), but this will be replaced with a physical temple – 1 after the rapture, and then this one after the Millennium begins. Israel was promised an earthly kingdom (in the Gospels, this is very clearly indicated as the expectation of faithful Jews once Messiah came) under the New Covenant. See also OT Passages Ezek. 36:25-28 & Jer. 31:21-34.

Christ's promise to His disciples in **Matt. 26:29** certainly at least implies the reinstatement of the Passover in the future kingdom and note **Ezek. 45:21**. If the celebration of Passover is restored, it follows that the main sacrificial feature of it may also be restored.

But having said all this, for what possible purpose would this system serve when the Lamb slain before the foundation of the world is sitting in the midst of His people in person, and after He abolished the necessity of these very sacrifices when He was slain? That of course is the million dollar question. To answer this question, my research has compelled me to narrow down the options to 2 things. Neither is very satisfying, but I cannot envision any other options.

i.) The Atonement View^{xi}

This view, supported by E.P. Sanders, postulates that the other main view – the Memorial View – is not sufficient. The atonement argument has 3 points:

- An OT worshipper believed that his/her sacrifice had an immediate and personally significant impact on their relationship with God.
- There is no OT evidence that every worshipper in the OT understood that this offering was anticipatory of the coming Messiah's sacrifice. God always had Christ's death in view but to humans, revelation has been progressive & the faith of OT offerers of sacrifices rested on God as their Saviour (as He had revealed Himself to them). He had promised life to them in the death of their substitutionary offering of blood. (cf. Gen. 22:8,13-14; Lev. 16; etc.)
- Living with the historical loss of sacrifice for so long – 2,000 years – has diminished the importance of the concept of sacrifice for us today.^{xii}

E.P. Sanders says, *“Modern people so readily think of religion without sacrifice that they fail to see how novel that idea is.”*^{xiii}

ii.) The Millennial Memorial View

This is by far the most popular view of those who see Ezekiel 40-48 as literal and future. Although no where in Ezekiel does it mention that these are memorial factors, many find a solution to the problem in seeing these chapters this way.

The idea is summarized this way: we Christians have had the memorial of The Lord's Table for 2,000 years, wherein we are called to 'remember' the sacrifice of Christ which took place from our perspective in the past. However, it is only to be observed until Christ returns. The OT Jewish sacrificial system, dismantled once Jesus came and died, was looking forward to that same occasion we memorialize as Christians. Therefore, these Millennial sacrifices will be retrospective – as memorials looking back on the accomplishment of Christ on the cross. These sacrifices will have a secondary purpose as well – that of warning of future wrath at the Great White Throne Judgment (from the perspective of the Millennial Kingdom, still future, and still affecting some who will inhabit the Kingdom)^{xiv}.

Remember that the Lord's Supper is an ordinance we are to practice "until Christ comes again" cf. I Cor. 11:26 – so it will cease or be replaced for this 1,000 year period. John Walvoord attempts to clarify this idea, *"Since this ordinance is only 'until He comes', another such reminder of Christ's redemptive work will be necessary for the generation that populates the Millennium."*^{xv} Charles Feinberg adds, *"...the function of the OT sacrifices were never efficacious;... they were never meant to be expiatory, that is to care for the penalty of sin; they were never meant to be anything but symbolic of the forfeiture of life for sin..."*^{xvi}

One problem with this view (and I believe it is the correct view) is that Ezekiel states (Ezek. 43:20,26; 45:12,17,20) that the blood sacrifices are "for atonement", thus paralleling Lev. 4:20,26,35; 16:27 & 17:11. Some attempt to deal with this objection by studying the meaning of 'atonement' (Hebrew – *kippur*) and finding that it can have a wider range of use than what is usually assumed. It can mean to 'purify' or 'cleanse' rather than 'cover' or 'avert wrath by the paying of a ransom'. I'm not sure how convinced I am by that particular argument, but it is the one most commonly used to justify Ezekiel's use of 'atonement'.

VI. The Prince

In Ezekiel 44:3, we are introduced to a person called simply, "the prince", without any explanation of who he is. In 45:7-9, referring to the land division, he is also called the prince, then v. 8 refers to 'princes' who are not to oppress the people and are to allow the people to have the land allotted to them & v. 9 is a rebuke or warning against the princes not to be oppressive or violent. The prince is also said to have unique privileges – such as to eat bread before the Lord (Ezek. 44:3) & to furnish the different offerings on behalf of Israel 45:16-17. 11

This singular, unique "prince" appears 13 more times in these verses – 45:7,16,17,22; 46:2,4,8,10,16,17,18; 48:21. He has rights and privileges that supercede those of others in these passages. He is without doubt a ruler of high caliber, but he is not the king. That role is reserved for Jesus Christ on the throne. Can we identify this prince?

One clue may be found in **Ezek. 34:23-24**. This is a prophecy of Christ, identifying Him as a descendant of David – an obviously very significant factor in how Messiah would be identified. A prince is a son of a king, and of course, Jesus is God's Son. The context of Ezekiel 34 is a rebuke against Israel's shepherds (their priests mostly) who were to be feeding the sheep (spiritual food), but who were instead leading them astray. But God promises to search for His sheep – cf. **Ezek. 34:11-31** = First advent to the Millennium.

Notice **37:24-28** – where again, this is the Millennium in sight and in v. 24, David is called their king (Christ), yet, down in v. 25, David is called their "prince forever."

Here is who I believe the prince is. Jesus, as the son of David – cf. **Matt. 22:41-46**, and cf. **Psalms 110:1** – is David's physical descendant, by prophetic necessity

because this was a key as to how He would be identifiable when He came the first time. Obviously, according to Matthew, the leaders of Israel refused to accept His pedigree and rejected His claims. The parables Jesus had just told them revealed their hearts – cf. Matt. 21:33-45; 22:1-14 – and His questions – 21:23-27 & 21:28-32 – made them look like spiritual fools.

I believe that this prince in Ezekiel's Millennium is none other than David, glorified former king of Israel, who serves His son, the greater David, the Lord Jesus Christ and shepherds His people as the main human leader of the Millennial world. Look at one of his stated roles in Ezek. 45:21-25 – bringing offerings on behalf of the people to the priests (cf. 46:2). Of course, Christ also promises some aspect of rulership as a privilege during the Millennial Kingdom to His faithful servants – cf. LK 19:12-27; Rev. 5:10; 20:4; I Cor.6:2 and II Tim. 2:12, etc. These princes then may be a high ranking group of administrators who, under Christ's authority oversee governmental aspect of the Kingdom near Jerusalem. So Jesus rules a King, and David as His prince rules under this One he himself called Lord (Ps. 110:1) which Jesus pointed to in Matt. 22:41-46.

VII. Sacrifices and Feasts – Some Key Aspects

There are few key aspects of this temple and the worship system described or implied that are at least worth mentioning;

- All the sacrifices mentioned / commanded in Leviticus are also mentioned or commanded in Ezek. 40-45. However, the feasts of Israel ⑫ show a variance from Levitical to Millennial. See the charts on the next page.
- God's glory fills this temple. His return to it is described in Ezek. 43. There is no mention of the Ark of the Covenant however, which was a necessary element in both Solomon's Temple & the Tabernacle. There is also no mention of a high priest, presumably because Jesus is the Great High Priest.
- There are likely many more contrasts and parallels but these are the ones that got my attention.

Summary

We'll leave this interesting but somewhat confusing section here by summarizing in 3 points things to keep in mind regarding worship in the Millennial Kingdom.

- God's presence will literally dwell in the midst of His people. The glorified Christ will literally reign from David's throne in Jerusalem. The earth will be sanctified by His presence.
- The unglorified population will be capable of sin / ritual defilement and pollution of the earthly sanctuary. Even those who enter the Kingdom saved (but as yet unglorified) will be capable of sinning (just as we are) and their children will be born sinners in need of salvation.
- The Millennial Kingdom will be under the New Covenant and regarded as a holy and priestly nation just as under Mosaic law. A status of

ceremonial and moral purity will need to be maintained so that a holy God can remain in the midst of an unholy people. *“Since every member of this theocratic kingdom will be required to conform to the ceremonial requirements, the sacrificial system will be necessary in order to sustain corporate sanctity.”*^{xvii}

Charts re: Millennial Sacrifices & Feasts

Levitical Sacrifices:^{xviii}

Burnt offering – Lev. 1:3-17
 Grain offering – Lev. 2:1-16
 Peace offering – Lev. 3:1-17
 Sin offering – Lev. 4:1-35
 Guilt offering – Lev. 5:1-6:7
 Drink offering – Lev. 23:13,37

Millennial

Ezekiel 40:39
 Ezekiel 45:15
 Ezekiel 45:15
 Ezekiel 40:39
 Ezekiel 40:39
 Ezekiel 45:17

Millennial Feasts ^{xix}

Levitical

N/A
 Passover – Lev. 23:5
 Unleavened Bread – Lev. 23:6-8
 Pentecost – Lev. 23:9-22
 Trumpets – Lev. 23:23-25
 Atonement – Lev. 23:26-32
 Booths – Lev. 23:33-44

Millennial

New Year – Ezekiel 45:18-20
 Passover – Ezekiel 45:21-24
 Unleavened Bread – Ezekiel 45:21-24
 N/A
 N/A
 N/A
 N/A

Next lesson – Lesson # 71 -- Man’s Final Rebellion – Rev. 20:7-10

ⁱ Or Feast of Tabernacles – see p. 405 in The Bible Almanac; JI Packer, Merrill Tenney, William White (eds) – related to harvest time. See also Deut. 16:13-17; Lev. 23:40-43.

ⁱⁱ Randall Price, The Temple and Bible Prophecy, Harvest House, 1999, reprint 2005; pp. 511-512.

ⁱⁱⁱ IBID, pp. 512-513.

^{iv} IBID, pp. 214-215, quoting Elwood McQuaid

^v Charles Lee Feinberg, The Prophecy of Ezekiel – The Glory of the Lord, Wipf and Stock Publishers 1969, reprinted 1963; pp. 233, 237

^{vi} All these points are from Price, pp. 517-525

^{vii} Price, pp. 524-525

^{viii} IBID, p. 533

^{ix} IBID, p. 533

^x IBIB, p. 545. Price also quotes within his own quote from Jerry M. Hullinger & John Whitcomb from a paper at Dallas Theological Seminary

^{xi} Price, p. 550

^{xii} IBID, p. 550

^{xiii} IBID – quoting EP Sanders, p. 550

^{xiv} IBID, p. 549

^{xv} IBID, p. 549 – quoting John Walvoord

^{xvi} IBID – quoting Charles L. Feinberg

^{xvii} IBID, Price, p. 556

^{xviii} John MacArthur, ESV Study Bible; Crossway, 2010, pg. 1181

^{xix} IBID, pg. 1189