

## Ezekiel, the Temple, and Jeremiah

### Commentary for June 1, 2012 — God's Word Is Interconnected

The prophet Ezekiel wrote extensively about the Temple in Jerusalem. This month's analysis of Ezekiel by Dr. Ernest L. Martin is about that Temple, the prophesied **"little sanctuaries,"** the Temple prophesied to come after Christ returns, and the Temples composed of our bodies that contain God's Holy Spirit (with you and I fulfilling Ezekiel's **"little sanctuaries"** prophecy). This is all in Dr. Martin's article, "Ezekiel, Part 2," for you to read after looking at the ["June 2012 Newsletter."](#)

Ezekiel was 30 years old when he was called to his prophetic ministry, five years after he was taken as an exile to Mesopotamia (Ezekiel 1:1–2). He was a priest, the son of Buzi (verse 1:3). Ezekiel had a stylized, educated, and well-informed writing style, having a great familiarity with the processes, vocabulary, and symbols of the priesthood and the Temple.<sup>1</sup> This indicates that he was probably a member of the priestly aristocracy, although details of his background and ancestry are not presented to us. Also unknown was whether Ezekiel ever practiced in the priestly ministrations of the Temple.

### **Ezekiel and Jeremiah**

The Book of Ezekiel has precise dating beginning in the 5<sup>th</sup> year until the 27<sup>th</sup> year of the 70 years of captivity. During this early period of exile Ezekiel continued to prophesy to the people of Jerusalem. It is interesting that the prophecies of Jeremiah and Ezekiel intersect, with Jeremiah writing from Judah and Jerusalem and attempting to talk sense into the kings of Judah, while Ezekiel was in exile with the nobility of Judah writing similar entreaties of doom upon the city of Zion and its Temple of YHWH to the remaining people and rulers.

In fact, Jeremiah wrote at least one open letter (and probably more) to the elders of Judah in exile while Ezekiel was sending his prophecies of doom in the opposite direction to Jerusalem:

**"Now these are the words of the letter that Jeremiah the prophet sent from Jerusalem unto the residue of the elders which were carried away captives, and to the priests, and to the prophets [probably referring to Ezekiel, and others], and to all the people whom Nebuchadnezzar had carried away captive from Jerusalem to Babylon. ..."**

• **Jeremiah 29:1**

The extent of Ezekiel's association with the prophet Jeremiah is not directly stated. However, theirs is not the only pairing of two or three witnesses of God's truth (recalling Deuteronomy 17:6, 19:15; Matthew 18:16; 2 Corinthians 13:1; 1 Timothy 5:19; and Hebrews 10:28). Ezekiel and Jeremiah both write often about false prophets in Judah. There seem to be many

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<sup>1</sup> "Ezekiel" in *The Lutterworth Dictionary of the Bible*, W.E. Mills, ed. (Cambridge: Mercer University Press, 1994).

of them in the land and the capital of Jerusalem.<sup>2</sup> The school of prophets of Samaria and Judah (often called **“the sons of the prophets”**) in the days of Jeremiah and Ezekiel were mostly false and corrupt and did not represent God to either the people or the government of the King of Judah:

**“As Elijah and Elisha, or Amos and Hosea, or Isaiah and Micah, or Haggai and Zechariah, so too Jeremiah and Ezekiel constitute a prophetic couple; compare e.g. in later time the sending out of the disciples of Jesus, two by two (Luke 10:1), the relation of Peter and John in Acts [chapter] 3ff; of Paul and Barnabas in Acts [chapter] 13ff; ...**

**Both prophets [Ezekiel and Jeremiah] prophecy about the same time; both are of priestly descent, both witness the overthrow of the Jewish nation, and with their prophecies [both] accompany the fate of the Jewish state down to the catastrophe and beyond that, [both are] rebuking, threatening, warning, admonishing, and also comforting and encouraging.”**

• **“Ezekiel,” ISBE**<sup>3</sup>

God’s Word is interconnected and intertextual. Both prophets also write about the Temple and how the Temple would be destroyed if the rulers and people of Judah did not repent and change their ways. They did not repent or change; destruction came upon them.

Ezekiel wrote about Israel’s restoration and a future Temple that would be constructed (Ezekiel chapters 40–48) during the beginning period of what Jesus referred to as **“the Kingdom of God.”** This edifice with its outer sanctuary walls of some 60 miles on each side will be in addition to the **“little temples”** or **“little sanctuaries”** (Ezekiel 11:16) that will contain God’s presence, His glory, His Spirit.

Those **“little sanctuaries”** are our fleshly bodies at this present time. Christ told His disciples about construction that would be done, probably referring to our spiritual bodies<sup>4</sup>:

**“Let not your heart be troubled: you believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father’s house are many mansions [rooms, dwelling places]: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there you may be also.”**

• **John 14:1–3**

We will be able to come and go into the Temple described in Ezekiel chapters 40–48. These are not just words with flowery figurative language. You are the Temple of God because you have within you God’s Holy Spirit. This is your future reality.

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<sup>2</sup> In Matthew 26:60 there were two false witnesses against Christ, while in Revelation 11:3 there are two true witnesses. Regarding false prophets in Judah and Samaria talked about in Ezekiel and Jeremiah, see Ezekiel chapter 13, 14:6–11, 22:23–28, Jeremiah 2:8, 26–30, 4:9, 5:13, 31, 13:13, 14:13–19, chapter 23, 26:11, 27:9–18, 28:8, 32:32, 35:15, 37:19.

<sup>3</sup> *ISBE – The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, 1st Edition, 1914.

<sup>4</sup> Probably a “dwelling” is also being constructed in the New Jerusalem in heaven, to be occupied when it comes to earth after the millennium is over.