

EZEKIEL 42

THE CHAMBERS OF THE TEMPLE

This chapter continues and concludes the describing and measuring of the great spiritual Temple that Ezekiel saw in a vision. We have a particular description of the chambers that were around the Temple-courts, and the uses for which they were designed; and the chapter closes with a survey of the whole grounds upon which the Temple and its courts were built. Let us pray for grace to learn the spiritual lessons that the Holy Spirit here intended to teach us.

After taking a very precise view of the Temple and the buildings that belonged to it, Ezekiel was now brought again into the outer court so that he might observe the chambers that were there. These private chambers that were built around the Temple – the place of public worship – teach us that our attendance upon God in solemn ordinances will not excuse us from the duties of the prayer-closet. We must not only worship God in the courts of His house; but we must also – both before and after our attendance there – enter into our personal chambers, in order to worship there. Within our closets, we must read, think, and pray to our Father in secret; and it is a great deal of comfort that the people of God have often found in their communion with Him in solitude.

These chambers were many in number. There were three stories of them; and although the higher stories were not quite as large as the lower ones (as we learned in chapter 41), yet they served just as well for personal devotions (verses 5-6). “In my Father’s house,” said the Savior, “are many mansions.” And in His house on earth, there are many chambers as well. Multitudes, by faith, have taken lodgings in His sanctuary; and yet there is still room!

Before these chambers, there were wide walkways (verse 4), so that those who had lodgings in these chambers might meet there for conversation. In these walkways, they might walk and talk together for their mutual edification, and they might communicate with each other concerning their knowledge and experiences. For we are not to spend *all* of our time between the church and the prayer-closet, although a great deal of time may be spent very profitably in both. But mankind is made for relationships; and Christians, in particular, are made to enjoy the communion of saints. We must make conscience of the duties of that communion, and we are blessed to take comfort from the privileges and pleasures of that communion.

In verses 13 and 14, the use was appointed for the chambers on the north and south sides of the court. They were for the priests who approached near unto the Lord, so that they might always be close to their business. Therefore, they are called holy chambers, because they were for the use of those who min-

Outline of the chapter:

- ❖ A description of the chambers that were around the courts of the spiritual Temple – verses 1-14
- ❖ A survey of the Temple-grounds – verses 15-20

istered in holy things. Those who have public work to do for God and for the souls of men must spend much time in private, so that they may be properly prepared for their responsibilities. Ministers should spend much private time in reading, studying, and praying; and they ought to be provided with conveniences for this purpose.

In these chambers also, the priests were to put the most holy things – those parts of the offerings which fell to their share. And there in those chambers, they were to eat those things – both they and their families, in a religious manner, for the place was holy; and thus they must make a difference between those holy feasts and other common meals. Furthermore, these chambers were the places where the priests were to lay aside their holy garments – their linen ephods, coats, girdles, and headdresses – which God had appointed them to wear when they served at the altar. When they had ended their service at the altar, they must lay aside those garments and put on other clothes, such as the common people wore; and this was to signify that the usage of them would only continue during those times before the New Testament.

We have followed the prophet as he observed the measuring of this great spiritual Temple, and now we are about to see the extent of the holy ground upon which we are treading; for that was also measured here, and found to be very large indeed. The dimensions of it were 500 reeds on each side (verses 16-19) – each reed being about 11 feet (3.4 m) long, so that it was just over a mile (1.6 km) on each side of the square of ground. Thus large were the suburbs (as we may call them) of this spiritual Temple, and it represented the great extent of the Church of the Gospel-times in which we now live – when all nations are to be discipled, and the kingdoms of the world are to become incorporated into Christ's Kingdom. There is plenty of room in God's house for the numerous bands of converts that are flowing into it – and shall continue to flow into it – as was foretold in Isaiah 49:18 and 60:4.

The dimensions of this surrounding ground were large, in order that a separation might be made by putting a very great distance between the sanctuary and the common places; and therefore, there was a wall surrounding it to keep out those who were unclean, and to separate between the holy and the wicked. This reminds us that a difference is to be made between common and sacred things, between God's name and other names, between His Day and other days, between His Book and other books, and between His institutions and other observances. Let us pray for grace that we may never cause this line of separation to become blurred!

Lord, help us to not only worship You in the courts of Your house; but give us grace to also consistently spend time with You in our prayer closets, and find comfort in our private communion with You! Amen.

