

The Temple: Destroyed, but Not Forever

Read Ezekiel 43:1-9

God's promise to live in the temple among His people had been conditional:

"If you walk in My statutes and execute My ordinances and keep all My commandments by walking in them...I will dwell among the sons of Israel, and will not forsake My people Israel." (1 Kings 6:12-13, NASB)

But Israel didn't keep their promises to God - not even close. So in 586 B.C., the temple was destroyed by Babylonian invaders. The entire country was devastated, and most of its population was deported to Babylon. Israel as a nation, with its temple, was no more.

Imagine how its people reacted. Imagine how you would react. Some were bitter. Some, disillusioned. Some realized that it was because of their country's sins; they knew that God had been just.

But God assured them that His purposes for them were not at an end. The same prophets who foretold the destruction and exile also foretold a restoration after 70 years.

Ezekiel was among the exiles led off to Babylon. While living there among the exiles, he was called to be God's prophet - God's voice to those who desperately needed to hear from Him.

Remember God's glory filling the temple at its dedication (1 Kings 8:10-11)? Ezekiel 10 records Ezekiel's vision of God's glory leaving the temple. What a sad day!

But that isn't the end of the story. Ezekiel 43:1-9 records the return of God's glorious presence to the temple. What's more, Ezekiel was given a visionary tour of the restored temple and was told to describe it to his fellow exiles. What message would this have brought to Ezekiel and to God's believing people?

- God's purposes had not been stopped, even by their horrendous sin.
- The temple would be rebuilt.
- God would again live among His people.

Had all hope in God been destroyed along with the old temple? No, their hopes had been raised. They had been refined and focused.

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