

Sermon to the Saints which are at Topeka, Kansas -- Sunday, April 9, 2017

***"Make a joyful noise unto the LORD, all ye lands. Serve the LORD with gladness: come before his presence with singing. Know ye that the LORD he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture. Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name. For the LORD is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all generations." (Psalms 100:1-5)***

This passage is eschatology. Our blessed co-elect have purposed it, through the New Testament Church dispensation, for a spiritual application to those coming forth into the church to serve God and (as spiritually instructed) men, and to receive the bounties of living water and bread of life to be found in "**his gates**" and when entering "**into his courts**". That's fine, of course, but this is primarily a binding commandment to the whole of the population of the earth -- under the millennial reign of the Messiah -- to come forth and give proper worship to the King of the Earth, as expressed by the enigmatic prophet:

***"And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles." (Zechariah 14:16)***

As I have traveled through John the Beloved's prognostications about the Day of the Lord, I have shared with this humble little body what I believe Scripture teaches us about that dispensational church body, the two witnesses, Antichrist, the False Prophet, the broad-spectrum timeline of that dispensation, Armageddon, the Marriage of the Lamb, the calling out of the Jewish remnant, the millennial reign of Christ, and other related matters. I've explored much of the seven seals, and some regarding the seven trumpets. There is much more work to do with those, and with the seven bowls or vials of Revelation 16; all of which is happy work that I look joyfully toward -- the Lord willing.

My travels took a major detour, as I examined the matters integral to the manic spasms in the earth under the sixth trumpet -- the second of the three "**woes**" the angel warns of here:

***"And I beheld, and heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, Woe, woe, woe, to the inhabitants of the earth by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels, which are yet to sound!" (Revelation 8:13)***

Revelation chapters 10 and 11 (through to verse 14) are part of that period under the sixth trumpet, so I recognize that to give the whole of the sixth trumpet a proper vetting I have to understand these seemingly incongruent visions. That is, between chapter nine with its locusts and monsters coming out of the Euphrates (on the one hand), then 10 and 11 with their seemingly dramatic shift in focus. I will bring to this body a fuller examination of those passages

in a later sermon. For now, I must speak to the detour that was triggered by *these* uniquely curious words:

***"And there was given me a reed like unto a rod: and the angel stood, saying, Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein. But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months." (Revelation 11:1-2)***

What this language imports, and why it is plopped down in what otherwise has all the markings of the first three and one half years of the seven-year dispensation called "***the great and dreadful day of the LORD***" (Malachi 4:5), is a bit of a puzzle. It is clear, as I have examined at some length in previous sermons, that in this first half of that dispensational period the Gentile church is spending some considerable time with those Jews who will receive a call to grace (the sealing of Revelation 7) and come forth to "***worship before [their] feet***" (Revelation 3:9); which is to say they will learn how to worship Christ as the Messiah from those Gentiles. Understanding this reality is good. Understanding more discretely what that looks like and where that will take place is better ... because it informs our framing for preaching these prophecies to our generation; binding them with the eternal Word with fidelity to our King.

These words, however, appear to be involving a subject matter that is more accurately viewed as being attenuated to -- connected to -- relevant to -- the period of time when Antichrist is in full control of the earth's population. That is, the events that take place in the *second* three and one half years of this seven-year dispensation. So, why then are they placed here in this pre-advent passage. To be more precise, what relevance does it have to the activities of the redeemed Gentile and Jew beloved who are coming to the close of the period preceding Christ's second advent -- recorded at Revelation 11:15? There is a reason for this, and I believe it to be a most instructive one.

Being words within the inspired canon of Scripture at all makes it important, as our friend Paul intimates to young Timothy:

***"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:" (2 Timothy 3:16)***

Being placed within the book that celebrates Christ's Revelation makes it of greater urgency to us. Having *so relevant a place* in that apocalyptic timeline makes it an essential thing to pursue. If properly viewed, it may possibly cause that same Christ's prophecies to make more sense to our limited intellects, as He said to His disciples:

***"And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple: and his disciples came to him for to shew him the buildings of the temple. And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? verily I***

***say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down." (Matthew 24:1-2)***

and

***"And as he went out of the temple, one of his disciples saith unto him, Master, see what manner of stones and what buildings are here! And Jesus answering said unto him, Seest thou these great buildings? there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down." (Mark 13:1-2)***

and, finally,

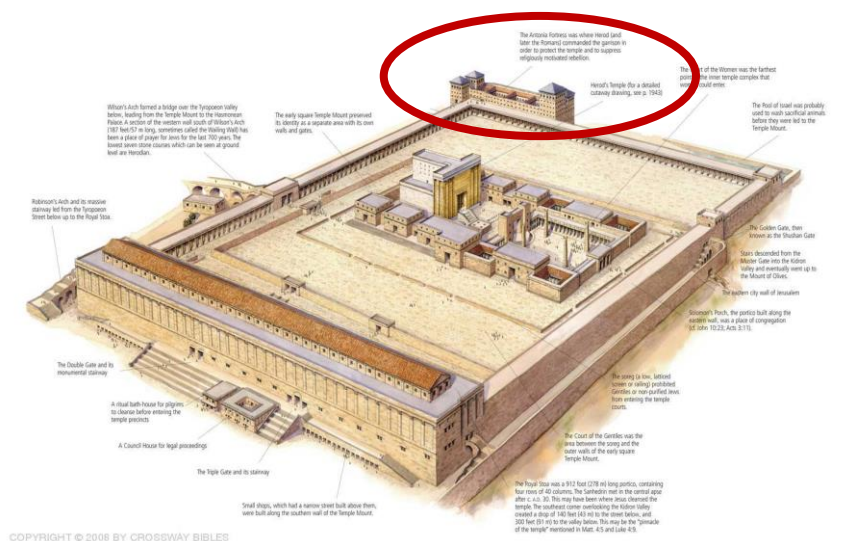
***"And as some spake of the temple, how it was adorned with goodly stones and gifts, he said, As for these things which ye behold, the days will come, in the which there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down." (Luke 21:5-6)***

I cannot speak for others here, but all I have ever taken from these words of Christ was that He informed the disciples that in addition to His intent to depart from the Jews -- leaving their spiritual house desolate -- He would have that standing focal point of their dead traditions to completely disappear into historical oblivion. It is quite interesting, and I think instructive, that there is actually strong disagreement between Jewish historians and scholars (using that term as loosely as it must be used in this generation) about where that temple, to which these verses make reference, stood.

The most common opinion among modern Jews is that it sat on what is now the grounds of the Al-Aqsa mosque, or where the Dome of the Rock can be viewed. This location, which is the third holiest site of Sunni Islam, is commonly referred to by modern Jews as the Temple Mount. This is a fable agreed upon from the late 11th century into the late 12th century AD, when Christian crusaders had possession of that mountain top for about 100 years, and had a church at that site, advertising it to be place where the temple stood. Having no true historical references to use for pinpointing the exact location of Herod's Temple, and being in unacceptable disagreement about the question, they resolved to settle the question by declaring that the temple stood on that location where the Islamic mosque sits. This is why that mountain top is the most sensitive site of all disputed territories in the perpetual Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Other scholars, however, insist that the temple was situated to the south of the mountain top, along the eastern slope downward. These scholars maintain that the Western Wall is not the western retaining wall of the Temple Mount, but is the *upper third* of the retaining wall for the Roman military base that stood at the top of the mountain for many centuries. They intimate that it is that military base "platform" or "structural framework" that sits at the very top of the mountain, and that the temple was situated immediately to the south of that military installation at the northern end of the City of David. In many of the traditional representations of Herod's

temple, that stood in the days of Christ's first advent, there is a small castle-like structure in the northwest corner that is representative of the military base (see example below, with red oval around "fort").



Critics of this view point out that the relative size of that representation could scarcely be expected to maintain more than a few hundred Roman soldiers, which we know realistically could not be the case from Scriptures like this from the book of Acts:

***"So the chief captain then let the young man depart, and charged him, See thou tell no man that thou hast shewed these things to me. And he called unto him two centurions, saying, Make ready two hundred soldiers to go to Caesarea, and horsemen threescore and ten, and spearmen two hundred, at the third hour of the night; And provide them beasts, that they may set Paul on, and bring him safe unto Felix the governor." (Acts 23:22-24)***

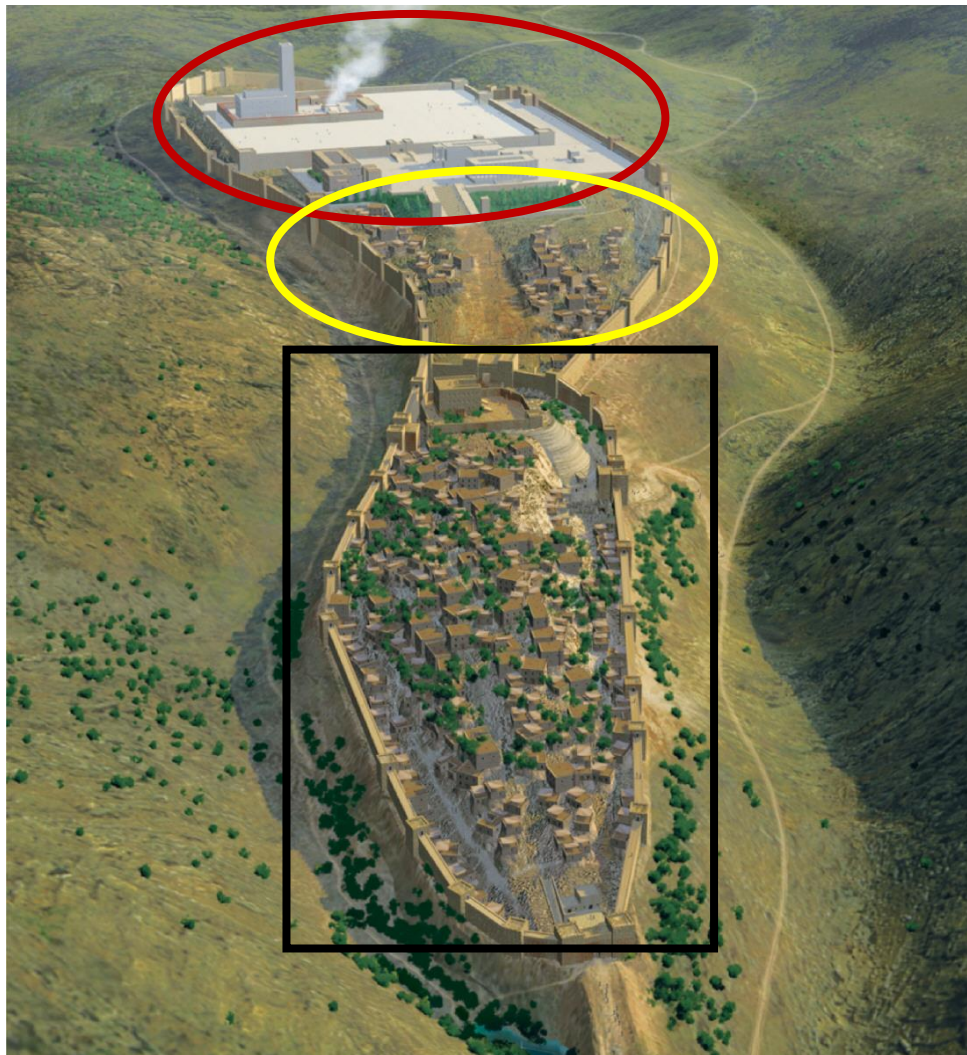
Unless the chief captain sent his entire compliment of soldiers -- having just dispatched 470 for this specific task -- effectively leaving the whole of his ward otherwise unguarded, it would not be possible for so small a fortress to house the Roman military base at Jerusalem. Furthermore, the physical layout of the larger plat of land presently housing the Al-Aqsa mosque is near precise dimensions of the standard Roman fort, built to house a full garrison of soldiers and support services (much as American forts are built the world over for our meddling armies).

Below is a picture illustrating the layout. The red oval represents where modern Jews believe the temple stood. The yellow oval represents the general area where the alternative location is situated (with the area in the red oval actually representing the Roman army base). The black rectangle generally shows the City of David, about which Scripture says this:

**"Then Solomon assembled the elders of Israel, and all the heads of the tribes, the chief of the fathers of the children of Israel, unto king Solomon in Jerusalem, that they might bring up the**

ark of the covenant of the LORD out of the city of David, which is Zion. And all the men of Israel assembled themselves unto king Solomon at the feast in the month Ethanim, which is the seventh month. And all the elders of Israel came, and the priests took up the ark. And they brought up the ark of the LORD, and the tabernacle of the congregation, and all the holy vessels that were in the tabernacle, even those did the priests and the Levites bring up." (1 Kings 8:1-4)

If by "**bring up**" and "**brought up**" in this passage, it is intended to refer to going either "up" the mountain or "up" to the north, each of the theorized options for where the temple was situated would be accurate. Josephus, however, in his writings about the destruction of the temple in 70 AD, indicated that he stood on the top of the mountain and when he looked down (south) there was nothing left to where the temple once stood.



The true beauty of these considerations is that God Almighty frustrates the dark imaginations of these Jews. When Christ declared that their house would be left unto them desolate (Matthew 23:38, Luke 13:35), that commandment brought with it the certainty that Jews would be utterly

unable to accurately reinstitute the mandated elements of service in His temple, or even to know where to build it! We know and love how effectual His judgments are.

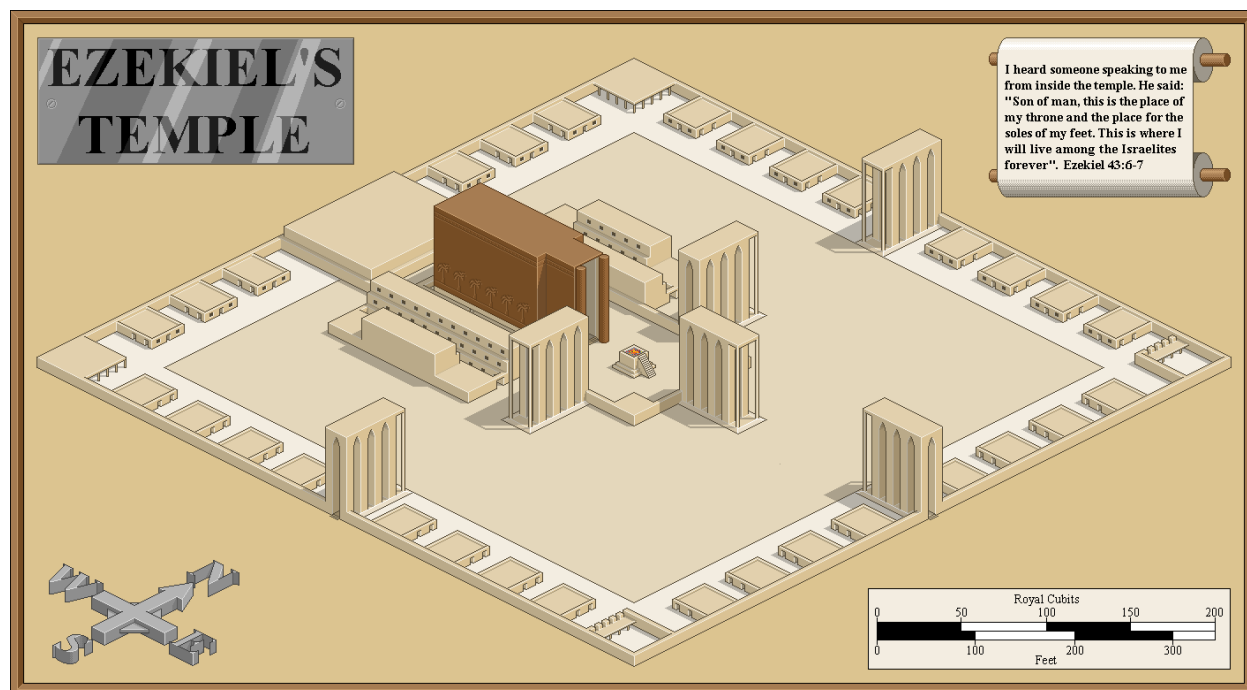
A more important examination to make from the words of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, about the buildings of the temple, is to determine why that subject matter was of such importance to those disciples -- every one of whom understood the abominations that were committed in that filthy house in that age. It always struck me odd that these blessed men would present themselves to the living Christ to offer up the bona fides of a temple that was the very essence of vainglory. This temple had been only recently refurbished and expanded by that nasty infidel King Herod. Some indeed suggest that it was still under finishing construction when Christ was in the earth and was finally finished in about 63 AD, just seven years before it was completely (though grudgingly) destroyed by the Roman general Titus. While it was splendidly appointed by human standards for that era, it is puzzling to think the disciples thought it appropriate to talk of its glories to Christ. Why would this be?

So the question is important. Furthermore, directly after Christ told them about the imminent destruction of Herod's temple, He launched into His sermon on eschatology. This makes it particularly relevant to us to understand the link between this discussion about the temple and these vital matters of Christ's return and millennial kingdom. Let us begin this examination by looking at some prophecy that would likely have been known to those Jewish disciples.

***"In the five and twentieth year of our captivity, in the beginning of the year, in the tenth day of the month, in the fourteenth year after that the city was smitten, in the selfsame day the hand of the LORD was upon me, and brought me thither. In the visions of God brought he me into the land of Israel, and set me upon a very high mountain, by which was as the frame of a city on the south. 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. 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." (Ezekiel 40:1-4)***

A careful reading of this vision- or prophecy-introducing passage reflects that while Ezekiel was with the children of Judah in Babylonian captivity, he was taken in the spirit to the top of Mount Zion. Looking down from that pinnacle, to **"the south"**, he observed the outer walls of an encampment. The word "city" in the clause **"as the frame of a city"** references a defended camp, so he saw the outer walls of an encampment, like what a city in those days might have on its borders. After this introduction to the subject matter, the next ninety verses (through to the end of chapter 42) are taken up with describing the layout and dimensions of the temple, inner courtyards and buildings, the outer courtyard and buildings, and the perimeter territory – that is equal to a full one square mile in dimension. There are many artist renditions that help visualize how this temple is laid out, so it is unnecessary and unproductive for me to go through all those

passages in detail today. I encourage you all to examine it in some detail, for your confident edification. Below is a sample of what can be found by way of artists' renderings:



One particularly interesting thing that I discovered in the close examination of these passages is that the word "chamber(s)" is found no fewer than 32 times in the description of this temple layout ... more than one fourth of all uses of that word in all the Bible. All around the perimeter of the outer courtyard in the drawing above, there are thirty such chambers (Ezekiel 40:17). Think about this fact in consideration of these words that have moved us not only to rejoice, but to even put into song:

***"Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast. For, behold, the LORD cometh out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity: the earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain."* (Isaiah 26:20-21)**

These words from the prophets Isaiah and Ezekiel were, no doubt, part of what Christ's Jewish disciples had in their hearts and minds when the Messiah was walking the earth with them. As many expositors have intimated, these gentle souls had (incorrectly) the notion that the Messiah's kingdom was going to be set up in the earth as part of His first advent. They knew about Ezekiel's vision, because he was instructed to tell about the visions of the temple:

***"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. 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." (Ezekiel 43:10-11)***

This is just a fascinating bit of knowledge here. What would be the point of the directive to measure the pattern -- to a nation of Jews who had been living around Solomon's temple for generations? Answer: this was not at all like the temple Solomon built -- nor like the tabernacle in the wilderness, both of which were fashioned after the pattern that was shown Moses on Mount Sinai, to wit:

***"And look that thou [Moses] make them after their pattern, which was shewed thee in the mount." (Exodus 25:40)***

So, it was a wholly new design that was in view for Ezekiel and for those to whom he faithfully reported so that it could become a part of this blessed canon of Scripture. When Nehemiah and Ezra went about the work of rebuilding Jerusalem, which work they finished in about 516 BC, they repaired the temple that previously stood in Jerusalem and reinstated the service to God as had been established in the tabernacle in the wilderness. They did not build what Ezekiel -- whose prophecy was delivered while they were still in Babylonian captivity -- saw and spoke of.

Another aspect of Ezekiel's temple vision that compelled the conclusion -- and likely heavily influenced the notions that the disciples held about Christ while he dwelt with them -- comes from this beautiful language:

***"Then he brought me back the way of the gate of the outward sanctuary which looketh toward the east; and it was shut. Then said the LORD unto me; This gate shall be shut, it shall not be opened, and no man shall enter in by it; because the LORD, the God of Israel, hath entered in by it, therefore it shall be shut. It is for the prince; the prince, he shall sit in it to eat bread before the LORD; he shall enter by the way of the porch of that gate, and shall go out by the way of the same." (Ezekiel 44:1-3)***

The prince -- which is none other than Christ Jesus -- was the only one to enter into or exit through the outer or inner court gate on the east side of the temple in Ezekiel's vision. It was otherwise to remain shut. Christ only. The Messiah only! In Solomon's and Herod's temple designs, there was no such restriction. The east entrance into the outer court was called Solomon's porch, about which we read, for example:

***"And as the lame man which was healed held Peter and John, all the people ran together unto them in the porch that is called Solomon's, greatly wondering." (Acts 3:11)***

So, when the disciples were with Christ -- and burdened with their notions that Christ was going to triumphantly walk into the city and the temple, where he would dwell with His people in a



new and glorious theocratic kingdom -- they were pressed in their hearts to know from Christ about when these matters would be. Naturally, having the buildings of Herod's temple within view, they wanted to inquire about the fulfillment of that vision that Ezekiel reported. This lens, I believe, helps us to understand why it was a natural transition in their dialog **from** Christ telling them the existing temple would be utterly destroyed **to** Christ describing for them the times during which He would be revealed and finally His millennial kingdom would be set up in a new temple.

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Now, I told you all of that so that I could tell you something else. Remember, please, that what sent me on this detour is an examination of the peculiar language of John, in Revelation 11, where he is directed by that angel presenting in chapter 10 – none other than our Redeeming Angel, even Christ (by His description in verse one) – to measure this **“temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein.”** Remember, please, that the time under examination is *before* Christ comes forth at the seventh trumpet – that **“last trump”** that Paul tells us about in 1 Corinthians 15:52 – during which period of time we see a good many things occur, which do indeed culminate in the **“kingdoms of this world [becoming] the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ”** (Revelation 11:15), when that Christ takes His throne for His millennial reign.

Why is John told *at this time* to measure the temple, altar, and those that worship therein? The word “measure” here used is the Greek “metreo” (where we get the English word “metric”), and refers to both the measuring of physical dimensions, as well as the act of comparing a thing or person to some standard to determine if it is in compliance. Which of these senses is intended in this directive to John might be better understood by examining its context. Remember, friends, John is not here represented as an “actor on this dispensational stage” of Christ’s Revelation; but rather a “seer” and “recorder” of things. The “voice” of this part of the book shifts from John seeing and hearing things that are happening with and between others to Christ speaking things to and interacting directly with John:

***“And when the seven thunders had uttered their voices, I was about to write: and I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not. And the angel which I saw stand upon the sea and upon the earth lifted up his hand to heaven, And swore by him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven, and the things that therein are, and the earth, and the things that therein are, and the sea, and the things which are therein, that there should be time no longer: But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets. ¶ And the voice which I heard from heaven spake unto me again, and said, Go and take the little book which is open in the hand of the angel which standeth upon the sea and upon the earth. And I went unto the angel, and said unto him, Give me the little book. And he said unto me, Take it, and eat it up; and it shall make thy belly bitter, but it shall be in thy mouth sweet as honey. And I took the little book***

*out of the angel's hand, and ate it up; and it was in my mouth sweet as honey: and as soon as I had eaten it, my belly was bitter. And he said unto me, Thou must prophesy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings. ¶ And there was given me a reed like unto a rod: and the angel stood, saying, Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein. But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months." (Revelation 10:4 through 11:2)*

In this sense, the first two verses of chapter 11 seem more in alignment with the whole of chapter ten ... both as to the "voice" of the recorded words, and as to that apparent subject matter. Without going into an exhaustive exposition of the words in chapter ten of Revelation, it is clear that John is given to see with great clarity the coming destruction of the unregenerate Jewish people. It is this vision that is represented in the eating of the book that was in his mouth "*sweet as honey*", but once eaten caused him to declare "*my belly was bitter*". I draw this conclusion by referencing a concordant passage that gives more detail:

*"But thou, son of man, hear what I say unto thee; Be not thou rebellious like that rebellious house [in context, referencing the rebellious Jews]: open thy mouth, and eat that I give thee. And when I looked, behold, an hand was sent unto me; and, lo, a roll of a book was therein; And he spread it before me; and it was written within and without: and there was written therein lamentations, and mourning, and woe." (Ezekiel 2:8-10)*

The same subject matter, in the same format, with the same directive – given to two distinct prophets, centuries apart. Having received this clear and disquieting vision, then, John is referred to another vision in kind with the prophet Ezekiel. Given a reed, like Ezekiel saw in Christ's hand; and sent forth to observe and measure the same temple observed by Ezekiel. In the one display he sees the coming horrors for the majority of the Jewish race; in the other, the respite coming for those redeemed to whom the new temple will come for them to "*worship therein*". One other syncing aspect between the detailed temple that Ezekiel was given to see measured out -- and that which John was sent forth to measure -- is found in comparing these two passages:

*"He measured it by the four sides: it had a wall round about, five hundred reeds long, and five hundred broad, to make a separation between the sanctuary and the profane place." (Ezekiel 42:20)*

and

*"But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months." (Revelation 11:2)*

Here these two passages express that clear separation between this temple compound area Ezekiel has just described in detail – with its 500 reeds (or one mile) scope – and the part of Jerusalem and Israel that will be left to Antichrist and his armies to tread upon for the second three and a half years of the seven-year dispensation.

There is a tendency on the part of past expositors to apply figurative meaning to the directive John is given in this subject passage ... as they do with much of the Revelation and, frankly, the vision of Ezekiel. But any reading of the vision testified of in Ezekiel demonstrates that there are far too many specifics – wholly distinct from the design of any temple heretofore existing – to deny that there is a new physical temple that is to be integral to the millennial kingdom of Christ. To turn every discussion about this temple found in prophecy into metaphoric references to one or more periods of the Gentile church dispensation is to eventually deny that there is a full return of the redeemed Jews to a full service to God and Christ in the perfection and fulfillment of the promise to Abraham. If you have numbered yourselves with these expositors, in your examination of these passages, please consider that this coming temple is quite actually a real, physical place.

And quite a glorious place, at that. The last component of this sermon addresses the place this coming temple holds in the event sequencing within the dispensation of the day of the Lord. To provide some framing, we must please remember that when the seventh trumpet blows, it initiates two critically-important – and mightily-related – events. First, the dead in Christ join with the living Gentile Saints in being taken up ***“unto God, and to his throne”*** (Revelation 12:5), or as the Apostle Paul puts it:

***“For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.”*** (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17)

Second, a series of events rips off that hastens the whole population of the earth furiously to the ***“battle of that great day of God Almighty.”*** (Revelation 16:14), and thence to the millennial reign of Christ. The first of these events is an instantaneous expression of Christ’s power and authority. The second, a preparation of the earth’s inhabitants for final resolution of God’s covenanted promise to Christ (before the world began) and later to Abraham. We have searched out how the 144,000 Jews will be taken into the wilderness to be ***“nourished for a time, and times, and half a time”*** (Revelation 12:14). We know that after this time, we find a declaration that those Jews appear standing with the Lamb on Mount Zion (Revelation 14:1). We were instructed, through a wonderful sermon by our beloved elder Sam, about the triumphant entry by Christ into His temple in Jerusalem as symbolized in His entry into Jerusalem on the beasts of burden to the cries ***“Hosanna in the highest.”*** (Matthew 21:9) What remains is to grasp an understanding of this temple – the putative location for these events, from eschatological prophecy.

**"And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament:" (Revelation 11:19)**

This final verse in Revelation 11 – part of the abbreviated statement of at least seven distinct earthly events that will be flowing from the sounding of the seventh trumpet in verse 15 – expresses a scene of awful beauty. This sermon will not turn aside to examining the other events, as our focus today is on this temple. This temple is referred to eight more times before Christ comes to His millennial kingdom (Revelation 14:15, 17; 15:5, 6, 8 [twice]; and 16:1, 7). It takes disciplined focus to discern the events that flow forward regarding this temple.

The word translated "**heaven**" in this passage is "*ouranos*" (oo-ran-os'), and emphasizes the concept of elevation. It, therefore is used to refer to lower elevations such as air and sky, as well as higher elevations such as the starry heaven and the third heaven where God dwells. It comes from the root word "*oros*" (or'-os), which means "a mountain". When Ezekiel is taken in the spirit to see this temple, he says that God brought him "**into the land of Israel, and set me upon a very high mountain,**" (Ezekiel 40:2), from which he observed the temple to the south.

I have spoken of this temple in the air, part of that "**new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from [] God**" (Revelation 3:12), about which the prophet Joel speaks, relating to this same distressing period:

**"The LORD also shall roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem; and the heavens and the earth shall shake: but the LORD will be the hope of his people, and the strength of the children of Israel. So shall ye know that I am the LORD your God dwelling in Zion, my holy mountain: then shall Jerusalem be holy, and there shall no strangers pass through her any more."** (Joel 3:16-17)

We know from Scripture that there is a physical temple of God. We know that it comes down in immediate relation to the sounding of the seventh trumpet, and that it includes the "**ark of the testimony**" (Revelation 11:19). We know that it is in the air or sky -- both because of the specific use of the term "heaven" discussed above, and because the activities coming forth from that temple references the clouds (Revelation 14:14-16). But we also know that God promised -- at least through Joel's prophecy and implicitly through the elaborate vision that Ezekiel prophesied about -- that it is situated in Mount Zion (Ezekiel 40:2; Joel 3:17).

We also know that Ezekiel and John's visions describe both holy and profane (within and without) territories related to the physical structure -- and Ezekiel's vision describes a perimeter of a square mile, in the center of which are the gates (outer and inner), courtyards (outer and inner), and the temple edifice itself (holy place and holy of holies).

We know further that Christ is seen by John standing with the 144,000 on Mount Zion (Revelation 14:1). Further reading of Ezekiel's vision -- chapters 43-48 -- describes in detail the activities of Christ, the Levites (in two classifications), and the Children of Israel actively participating in sacrifices and ministrations within the temple. It also describes that when the people come to worship at the temple, they enter the south gates and exit the north or enter the north gates and exit the south (Ezekiel 46:9). All of this activity requires two things: The temple be in the earth and that those dwelling in the earth are entering into the temple. This knowledge helps us to discern at what time this beautiful structure comes to rest in the earth ... or at least when access is given to the inner edifice (holy place and holy of holies) by earthly inhabitants.

***"And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God, and from his power; and no man was able to enter into the temple, till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled." (Revelation 15:8)***

This passage helps us to understand, with a bit of additional subject matter analysis, that the **temple -- at least that part of the enclosure that contains the holy place and holy of holies --** does not allow access by men until after the battle of Armageddon. Three references tell us this. First, the passage just quoted intimates that occupation is delayed until the seven plagues (referencing the vials from the previous verse, Revelation 15:7) are fulfilled. It is under the sixth vial that the kings of the earth are drawn into the battle of Armageddon (Revelation 16:12-16). Second, we must consider the import of this amazing passage from Ezekiel's vision:

***"Afterward he brought me to the gate, even the gate that looketh toward the east: And, behold, the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the east: and his voice was like a noise of many waters: and the earth shined with his glory. And it was according to the appearance of the vision which I saw, even according to the vision that I saw when I came to destroy the city: and the visions were like the vision that I saw by the river Chebar; and I fell upon my face. And the glory of the LORD came into the house by the way of the gate whose prospect is toward the east." (Ezekiel 43:1-4)***

This language of Ezekiel's -- drawing the lens of the reader to the vision he earlier testified of respecting the sealing of the Jews and the spirit of the four living creatures moving through providence, through the destruction of the remaining Jewish nation at Jerusalem to the Kingdom of Christ (Ezekiel chapters 9 and 10) -- shows that at the fulfillment of these things God's glory then comes to rest in the holy of holies within this new temple.

The third reference telling us that the occupation of this temple is after the battle at Armageddon is related to Sam's sermon about the entering in of the conquering Christ to Jerusalem and his seat of authority in the temple of God on Mount Zion. After the glory of God has entered into the new temple, Ezekiel is told that Christ -- the Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:6) -- will enter in through the same way by which the glory of God entered, and that gate shall otherwise not be opened.

(Ezekiel 44:1-3). It is after this that the ordinances related to the performance of sacrifices and ministrations to the Children of Israel begin.

Time will not allow a more expansive examination of this subject today, and there is much still to be learned about this temple and what Ezekiel's vision refers to as "***the law of the house***" (Ezekiel **43:12**). It is also not completely clear whether this temple that Ezekiel and John were given to see is built by the Jews dwelling on that mountain while Antichrist destroys Jerusalem and her inhabitants outside the walls, or comes down in its full glory from the heavenly Jerusalem for those blessed Jews to inhabit (outside of the temple edifice) while Antichrist rages. I'm not 100% certain that scripture satisfactorily answers that question, though I believe it is very clear that God's glory flows from that heavenly Jerusalem into this new temple and Christ dwells with those Jews there and sets up His millennial kingdom there.

I am hopeful that you have learned something from this journey today, and I am thankful to dwell with this humble body of Saints who love God, His people, and His city, Jerusalem the Golden.

Amen.