

## **Naked Bible Podcast Transcript**

**Episode 157**

**Ezekiel 40-48, Part 2**

**May 6, 2017**

**Teacher: Dr. Michael S. Heiser (MH)**

**Host: Trey Stricklin (TS)**

### **Episode Summary**

This episode continues our discussion of Ezekiel's temple vision. Whereas Part 1 noted the problems a literalistic approach produces for both coherent interpretation and consistency in biblical theology, this episode looks at positive indications in the text that compel us to read the temple vision in a way that transcends literalism. Doing so observes the way Ezekiel re-purposes cosmic mountain imagery and Leviticus 25 in these chapters and produces fascinating conceptual and theological connections between the temple vision and Jesus, his atonement, and believers as members of his body.

### **Transcript**

**TS:** Welcome to the Naked Bible Podcast, Episode 157: Ezekiel chapters 40-48, Part 2. I'm the layman, Trey Stricklin, and he's the scholar, Dr. Michael Heiser. Hey, Mike, how are you doing?

**MH:** Pretty good. Pretty good. Had a good trip recently.

**TS:** Chicago!

**MH:** Yeah, Chicago. Back to normal here—the normal chaos, I guess I could say. Kinda caught up, but yeah—it was fun. It wasn't just a speaking trip, either. I got to go to Wrigley Field. I guess I can cross that off the bucket list. I've always wanted to see Wrigley Field and, of course, Fenway park. I'm a Red Sox fan. I really like the Cubs, too, but those are the two old-time ballparks still in the league to kind of see how parks used to be—right in neighborhoods, which was really a great experience. It was an entirely different experience to be honest with you, just to walk from the hotel to the stadium. You're just passing normal row-houses like any other neighborhood and then—boom—there it is. There's the stadium. Who put that there? (laughing) It's like, that shouldn't be here. That should be away out in the suburbs somewhere, but it's just right downtown. It was great.

**TS:** We've come a long way. I have Jerry's World. That's what we have now. Quite a bit of difference there.

**MH:** It's the same kind of thing for the Packers in football. I made one trip up to training camp one year to see Lambo and watch some practice sessions. You're just kind of driving along in this little town and you turn the corner and—boom—there's Lambo Field. It's the same... Who put that there? That's a mistake!

**TS:** Have you ever bought stock?

**MH:** The last time they did that I think I was a year out of grad school or something like that. I thought about it, but to be blunt, it would've hurt us. (laughing) It was like 200 bucks, you know? It would have hurt to buy that share of stock, so I couldn't justify it. No, I'm not a stockholder, unfortunately. But I guess if they do it again I'll probably buy a share just to say that...

**TS:** Absolutely.

**MH:** Then I could go to the shareholders' meeting like they used to have on TV when I lived in Wisconsin. Anybody got a question? Put a microphone down there in the field in the stadium with thousands of people there. It was ridiculous!

**TS:** I'll have to change your intro from "scholar" to "Green Bay Packers owner."

**MH:** There you go. Yeah, why not? I just like seeing that kind of thing in a town. Again, it's just so different. It's an entirely different experience. I'm glad we did it.

Hey, before we jump in, I should mention that in Chicago (we try to do this) we got to meet with some listeners to the podcast. They actually met at the speaking event. It didn't have anything to do with *Unseen Realm* or the podcast. This was something different. But there were people who came and I got to sign some books, got to have lunch with some people who listen to the show and really are very ministry-minded. We actually talked a lot about the house-church thing—that episode and that whole approach to things. It was great. I like doing stuff like that. I'll confess that trips really mess me up as far as my time, but they're always worth it just to have conversations like that.

**TS:** All right, Mike. Well, this is it! I don't know what to do with myself after today because no more Ezekiel. I'm kind of lost here.

**MH:** (laughing) Kind of lost!

**TS:** I have mixed emotions.

**MH:** You'll be disoriented after today, yeah. We should jump in here. Just like the last one, there's a lot of detail to cover here. I don't know how long it'll take. It will

surprise listeners, I think, to go through this. The natural tendency is to wonder, "Well, if we're not going to look at this literally, what is there to talk about?" Well, there's a whole lot to talk about with respect to interpretation—how we should read this description, these chapters (Ezekiel 40-48).

5:00

In Part 1 of our treatment of this (in the last episode), we talked about the question of how we're supposed to read it—is it literal or something else? Are we supposed to see a literal future building in these chapters—a millennial temple that is in operation after the Second Coming of Christ? We spent a good deal of time on that. We talked about the *nasi* (the prince) in these chapters and made points of connection or disconnection, depending on how you read these chapters with the messiah—how we read it messianically. We discovered that if you just read these chapters literally (this rigid commitment to literalism) you have all kinds of problems. You have theological problems, you have interpretive problems in both respects here with the building idea (the structure idea) and then the prince. I let it be known in the last episode that I was predisposed to a non-literal understanding of the vision, not only for the negative reasons (which we talked about in the last part and was one of my three reasons). The other two were the way Ezekiel 38 and 39 gets repurposed in the New Testament. Again, I think that lends itself to a non-literal approach. Then I mentioned there were positive arguments for seeing the description as pointing to a reality that transcends a physical building. That's really our subject matter for today. In Part 1 last time, I telegraphed the positive ideas just a little bit—I guess a little bit of a teaser at the end of Part 1. Alongside the problems created by a literal approach, there are hints in the text that a non-literal interpretation is not only appropriate, but really that's what was intended. In other words there would have been readers who picked up on certain things.

The short list of the positive arguments for a non-literal approach that I gave were these (these are in a little bit different order than I teased this episode with last time):

1. There's New Testament temple-talk.
2. There are strong links to the Eden story and the cosmic mountain idea.
3. There's something going on in Ezekiel 48 with the rearrangement of the tribes that sort of drives us to think non-literally.
4. I mentioned an article by Bergsma: "Restored Temple as Built Jubilee in Ezekiel 40-48." I let the cat out of the bag at least that much and I read a little section about the Bergsma article to set this episode up.

What we're going to do this time is I'm going to walk through each of those four things in more detail for our time today. I'm going to start with the first one because it's the easiest. It's sort of the most obvious, and that is New Testament

temple-talk. It's a very straightforward starting point, so that's where we're going to begin.

I would say, as I hinted at last time, that the New Testament is pretty clear about its use of temple language in association with Jesus' body. And, of course, Jesus' body is the place in which the glory of God (God himself) was because of the incarnation. Jesus was God incarnate. It's natural to look at Jesus' body, when you come at it with the incarnation in mind, and say, "Sure, this is a temple. This is God's temple now. God isn't really dwelling... there's no shekinah glory cloud in the temple where the Jews are going to every Sabbath there in Jerusalem. There's nothing like that. The glory departed and it hasn't returned. There's this future expectation of the return of the glory, but the glory's right here! It's in this person, Jesus." And so the Gospel of John, in particular, picks up on this idea. There's some clarity there with the temple being Jesus' body. Then, of course, since we are the body of Christ collectively as believers, we're also the temple. We talked about Paul's language. I want to read some of the passages here. When I read these, just think about what the passages actually say—what they actually describe.

Let's start in John chapter 2 (the one about Jesus' body), starting in verse 18:

**<sup>18</sup>So the Jews said to him, "What sign do you show us for doing these things?" <sup>19</sup>Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." <sup>20</sup>The Jews then said, "It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will you raise it up in three days?"<sup>21</sup> But he was speaking about the temple of his body. <sup>22</sup>When therefore he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this, and they believed the Scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken.**

10:00

The disciples only get clued in here after the resurrection because they're picking up on the three-days thing. It's a foreign concept to them to have a person... They're living in Jerusalem and there is a physical structure there that is the temple. It would've been a foreign concept and a stretch to them to think, "There's this guy, Jesus, and his body is now really the temple because this one's going to be destroyed and the glory of God isn't there anymore, and then abstractly, we're going to be thinking of ourselves as the body of Jesus, too." Those are abstractions that they could only really process after the resurrection and, really, even years after that as they started to put the threads together—the points of the "messianic mosaic" (the term I use in *The Unseen Realm*). This took awhile after the fact for them to formulate this theology based on not only their experience with Jesus, but based on passages from the Old Testament and (more importantly) *concepts* from the Old Testament that they saw played out in the life of Jesus and that they could conceptually weave together after the fact in

their post-resurrection ministry. Here in this passage, they're focused on the three-days thing, and that's their immediate point of contact right after the resurrection. But when we look at it, we have the letters of Paul and we have what Peter's going to say about believers being the temple and being indwelt by the Spirit of God, the glory of God tabernacling in believers. We have all that language, so it's easier for us to see this idea of the temple being not only the body of Christ, but since we are the body of Christ, we also are the temple of God collectively and even individually our body is a temple. So I'm going to read some passages from Paul and some other places. It's not just Paul, it's Peter, as well, that has this idea. In 1 Peter 2:4, building on this "Jesus' body being the temple" idea, just listen to the text. Peter writes beginning in verse 1:

**So put away all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander. <sup>2</sup> Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up into salvation— <sup>3</sup> if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good. <sup>4</sup> As you come to him, a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious, <sup>5</sup> you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. <sup>6</sup> For it stands in Scripture:**

**“Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone,  
a cornerstone chosen and precious,  
and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame.”**

**<sup>7</sup> So the honor is for you who believe, but for those who do not believe,  
“The stone that the builders rejected  
has become the cornerstone,”**

**<sup>8</sup> and**

**“A stone of stumbling,  
and a rock of offense.”**

Look at this language. This is from the Old Testament:

**Behold I am laying in Zion a stone...**

And Peter interprets that stone as being a person:

**Whoever believes in *him* will not be put to shame.**

So there you have an Old Testament backdrop that Peter sees after the fact that makes sense of the John 2 (the temple is Jesus' body) kind of concept. He applies it to believers here when he refers to believers as "living stones." Those living stones—those believers—are being built up into a spiritual house. In other

words, it's not a structure or building, but it's a spiritual building or house. Why? To be a holy priesthood. You need a priesthood if you're going to have a temple. What's a temple without priests? And the priests are you and me—us.

**To offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.**

Again, it's very clear that the temple language is being applied to both Jesus and us—the portions, the parts of his body, which is the Church. So believers are the temple of God because we are the body of Christ, both individually and corporately. Let's take a look at a few other passages. Ephesians 2:18-22 says this:

15:00

**<sup>18</sup> For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. <sup>19</sup> So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, <sup>20</sup> built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, <sup>21</sup> in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. <sup>22</sup> In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.**

You had a half a dozen references there to building and structure and stones, applied to being members of the household of God. "Built on the apostles and prophets," "Jesus is the cornerstone," we are part of this structure "being joined together into a holy temple." It's very transparent. This is easy to read over. We have been conditioned, I think, within the evangelical orbit (I hate to put it this way) to not see temple language in the New Testament. We have been conditioned only to think of this millennial thing. It's very transparent here in Ephesians 2. Let's go to 1 Corinthians 3:16. This is one we mentioned last time. Just like in Ephesians, Paul is speaking to a predominantly Gentile audience. They were strangers and pilgrims, but now they're not. Here we have with the Corinthian situation:

**<sup>16</sup> Do you not know that you are [plural verb] God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you? [plural pronoun]**

He's speaking to a Church there, which is comprised of individuals, so the plural is being used. But, of course, they're a collective, as well.

**<sup>17</sup> If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him. For God's temple is holy, and you are that temple.**

What could be clearer? In 1 Corinthians 6 (a few chapters later), Paul is again talking about the same thing. He says:

**<sup>19</sup> Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, <sup>20</sup> for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.**

It's talking about sexual immorality here, so he is speaking to individuals but there's still the plural language in the Greek text because the individuals are also a collective. It's two sides of the same coin. But, again, the temple connection is very clear. Those are the ones that I think we should know, but in my experience I've found that a lot of Christians don't know them. But there are some other ones that are equally as transparent but are usually missed, skipped over. Here's 2 Corinthians 5. I'm going to read the first five verses. Just listen to this!

**For we know that if the tent [MH: What does that remind you of? The tabernacle!] that is our earthly home is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. <sup>2</sup> For in this tent we groan, longing to put on our heavenly dwelling, <sup>3</sup> if indeed by putting it on we may not be found naked.**

Of course, he's speaking of an individual's body, but when he speaks of an individual's body he's using tabernacle and tent language because he's already done that in 1 Corinthians! They get it.

**<sup>4</sup> For while we are still in this tent, we groan, being burdened—not that we would be unclothed [MH: not that we should want to die], but that we would be further clothed, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. <sup>5</sup> He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who has given us the Spirit as a guarantee [MH: the indwelling of the Spirit].**

The very next chapter, 2 Corinthians 6. Paul says in verse 14:

**<sup>14</sup> Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness? Or what fellowship has light with darkness? <sup>15</sup> What accord has Christ with Belial? Or what portion does a believer share with an unbeliever? <sup>16</sup> What agreement...**

In all those verses leading up to this point, he's talking about believers versus unbelievers. Now he switches and doesn't use the word "believers" or making it about humans in human terminology.

20:00

**<sup>16</sup> What agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; as God said [MH: and now he's going to quote Leviticus 26],**

**"I will make my dwelling among them and walk among them,  
and I will be their God,  
and they shall be my people.**

**<sup>17</sup> Therefore go out from their midst,  
and be separate from them, says the Lord,  
and touch no unclean thing;  
then I will welcome you,**

**<sup>18</sup> and I will be a father to you,  
and you shall be sons and daughters to me,  
says the Lord Almighty."**

So he quotes a Leviticus passage, and everybody living back in the days of Leviticus would have only been thinking of a structure as a temple, but Paul says that very same passage is justification for calling believers and calling this church and The Church "the temple." The language is transparent. Let's go to 2 Peter 1:13-14. I'm going to read this, and what I'm looking for here is sort of hidden by the English text—it's obscured. Peter says:

**<sup>13</sup> I think it right, as long as I am in this body, to stir you up by way of reminder...**

"Body" here in Greek is the term *skēnōma*. It's related to other terms like *skēnos* or *skēnoō*. This is the term in Greek that is used to translate the term for "tabernacle" in the Old Testament. So a Greek hearer—someone who that would have been the language they're listening in and they could understand it, or their native language or whatever (Hellenized Jews would have known Greek very well)—would have heard this:

**I think it right, as long as I am in this tabernacle [or "as long as I'm tabernacling in this body"] to stir you up by way of reminder, <sup>14</sup> since I know that the putting off of my body [*skēnōma*] will be soon, as our Lord Jesus Christ made clear to me. <sup>15</sup> And I will make every effort so that after my departure you may be able at any time to recall these things.**

So there are things like this where, if you can kind of penetrate the English, it will sort of stand out to you. They're thinking of their bodies in terms of being tabernacles and temples. Because why? Because the Spirit of God (the glory of God) is dwelling in them.

The question is, why would we look for a literal temple to come when 1 Corinthians 3:16, 1 Corinthians 6, Ephesians 2, 2 Corinthians 5—all these passages—have believers individually and corporately as the temple of God? If we supposed the people of Ezekiel's day couldn't imagine a temple without the literal trappings of that terminology, maybe it's equally true that perhaps they couldn't have imagined the temple being indwelt people. Typically, the appeal to literalism here is, "Well, Israelites who would have read this would have expected a literal structure." That's fair. Of course, we've already seen that there are certain Old Testament temple/tabernacle passages that the apostles apply to individual believers. The apostles make that connection under inspiration. So it's really not an issue of what an Israelite would have expected, necessarily, as under inspiration people are saying, "This is how this passage would have worked its way out."

25:00 With all this temple language in the New Testament applied to either Jesus, his body, or us as the Body of Christ, why should we expect a building to come back? Why should we expect that? Why would we need to revert to purifying sacred space, to having sacred space in the form of a structure? And again, just check back with the last episode. In Ezekiel's temple description there are different objects of furniture that are pretty important that are missing in the description. Why would we need to revert to a physical structure as sacred space when we are already sacred space? Why would we revert to doing sacrificial rituals to purify a piece of ground that is occupied by a literal structure so that we could be in the presence of God when the presence of God is already in us? We are told to go boldly to the throne of grace for precisely that reason. We don't need to go to a building and be purified to occupy (to stand on) sacred space. We have access now because we are members of Christ's body, who is the temple. That's why we're the temple. We're the temple because he's the temple and we are in Christ. Thinking about this with a literal expectation is a theological reversion to something that has already in the New Testament pages been superseded. We need to give credence to that. These are New Testament writers applying these passages and this language in this way. Frankly, I don't think that we can assume very cavalierly that we should dismiss it.

That's the easy place to talk about this. That's the most familiar. I want to go to Numbers 2 and 3 in my list. I'm going to combine these because number 3 is really part of number 2. But the second and third reasons that I gravitate toward a non-literal approach would be that there are links to the cosmic mountain idea in Ezekiel 40-48. Third, there's this thing about the rearrangement of the tribes in Ezekiel 48. That's actually sort of a subset of cosmic mountain thinking. For those who are new to the podcast, it's a little hard to get you up to speed in one

episode. I'd say go read *Unseen Realm* and you'll find out in the first third of the book what we're talking about with cosmic mountain stuff. In a nutshell here, the phrase "cosmic mountain" is an academic one that refers to God's dwelling place *and* (this is important) the place where he held council. That is, the place from which God ran (or runs) the cosmos—where he issues decrees that affect the destiny of humanity and where he tasks his human imagers (believers) with their role in God's program. I dealt with that a lot in *Unseen Realm*. You can go back and read that. There are other features to it, but I'm hoping this will be sufficient for the sake of this episode.

It's an idea that we have seen elsewhere in Ezekiel; the cosmic mountain theme has cropped up prior to chapters 40-48. One of those that I'm going to build off here is that the place where God lives (which would have been the temple in Jerusalem in Ezekiel's day because Mount Zion was the cosmic mountain and the temple)... The place where God lives was viewed in Ezekiel in one or two places as the "center of the earth." I should say, incidentally (and pardon me for the rabbit-trail), but this is another quandary for flat-earthers. Just get out a flat-earth map and you're going to see that Jerusalem is not the geographical center of the flat earth by any measure. So this isn't language that we want to take literally (uber-literalism again)—just this unthinking, robotic, literalistic approach. This is conceptual language—this idea that the cosmic mountain (wherever it is) is the center of the earth. The reason it's thought of as the center of the earth is because this is where all the decisions are made by God and his council to run the show. This is where everything happens. Everything is oriented to and by this place. With that in mind, let's look back at Ezekiel 38:11-12. We're going to be seeing a few things here going up into chapters 40-48, but I want to reacquaint you with a couple of the statements that we've already seen in Ezekiel. Ezekiel 38:11-12... These are words that are put in Gog's mouth in this revelation. This is related through Ezekiel, but this is what Gog is thinking in context:

**<sup>11</sup> and say, 'I will go up against the land of unwalled villages. I will fall upon the quiet people who dwell securely, all of them dwelling without walls, and having no bars or gates,' <sup>12</sup> to seize spoil and carry off plunder, to turn your hand against the waste places that are now inhabited, and the people who were gathered from the nations, who have acquired livestock and goods, *who dwell at the center of the earth.***

We know that Ezekiel 38 and 39 is an invasion of Jerusalem/Israel. This is referred to as the center (*tabbur*) of the earth. It's not a literal, geographical thing. This is a concept. By saying it's symbolic or metaphorical or conceptual it doesn't mean it's not real. This is where the dwelling place of God was, where the presence of God was, and this is where God runs the show. This is part of biblical theology. Ezekiel 5:5 says this:

**<sup>5</sup> Thus says the Lord God: This is Jerusalem. I have set her in the center of the nations, with countries all around her.**

30:00

So this notion that Israel, of all the nations of the world... Jerusalem is at the center of all that. Again, geographically, if you're going to actually do measurements, that's not going to work literally. It's a concept; it's conceptual. Let's take this and go to Ezekiel 40-48. I'm going to quote here an article that I put in the protected folder for newsletter subscribers so you can read this whole article. It's by Levenson, called "The Temple and the World." It's very good. He comments on both of these passages that we just read, and then he's going to get into Ezekiel 40-48. Here's what he says:

The word here translated "in the midst of" (*betok*) can have either a general significance ("inside," "amidst") or a precise one ("in the very center of"), as in Num. 35:5, where the city stands in the mathematical center (*tawek*) of the Levitical patrimony. The rearrangement of the tribal lands in Ezekiel 48 argues for the latter interpretation, for there Jerusalem, renamed "YHWH is there" [MH: that's what Jerusalem is called in Ezekiel 48], is put almost in the center of the tribes, whereas, historically, eleven tribes were to its north and only one to the south. In other words, the utopia in the school of Ezekiel seems to take literally the assertion of centrality in Ezek. 5:5. If they were correct in their literal reading, then the translation "navel" for the very rare word *ṭabbur* in Ezek. 38:12 is most likely... In Josephus, we find the cosmic conception of the Temple in an enhanced statement: not simply that the shrine is the center, but that it is a microcosm... Josephus tells us regarding the Mosaic Tabernacle, "every one of these objects is intended to recall and represent the universe, as [the reader] will find if he will but consent to examine them without prejudice and with understanding." (Josephus Jewish War 3, 7:7)

What Levenson is saying here is that the rearrangement of the tribes at the end of Ezekiel 48 suggests that the writer is thinking of Jerusalem as the cosmic center of everything—the cosmic center of the world, the cosmic mountain. This is what the cosmic mountain was in biblical theology. It is the place that is at the center of the universe, of all existence, of everything. You can't literalize this and have it make any sense. I'm not just talking to the flat-earthers here, I'm talking to those who would want to literalize these chapters. You can't literalize this. And since you can't literalize it, that suggests to the reader that we've got something conceptual going on—that we should read Ezekiel 40-48 conceptually, metaphorically, symbolically. There's something going on here, other than just rigid literalism.

Now take that and let's keep thinking about these chapters. There's language in Ezekiel 40-48 that apparently casts the temple in cosmic mountain terms in other ways. If we go to Ezekiel 43:13-17, it's a reference to the altar that is in this

35:00

envisioned temple. This is really obscured in English translations. The Hebrew matters here. We have a reference here in verse 14 to the altar being from the "base on the ground" (a description of the altar). The Hebrew there is *mekek ha aretz* (מִתְּחִילֵי הָאָרֶץ). It literally is "the bosom of the earth." In Levenson's quote, he talked about how *tabbur* could be translated "the navel of the earth." These were ideas of total centrality. The altar is referred to as "the bosom of the earth" in this passage. You say, "Where's he getting this idea?" Recall one of the items in Solomon's temple that wasn't in the tabernacle that possibly indicates that the earlier temple (Solomon's temple, not just the one being envisioned by Ezekiel once Solomon's temple was destroyed)... There are things in that description that show us that the temple was conceived of as the cosmic mountain—the very center of everything and center of the universe idea. The copper sea or the molten sea or the bronze sea (English translations do render it differently)... the *yom mutsach* (יָם מוֹצֵק)... That is part of the temple description of the temple of Solomon. It was this big bronze thing that held lots of water. It was said to have stood in the courtyard of Solomon's temple. It's described in 1 Kings 7:23-26 and in the parallel account in 2 Chronicles 4:2-5. I want to quote from Carol Meyers here in the Anchor Bible Dictionary. She says this of this copper/bronze/molten sea:

Just as spectacular as its size was its ornamentation. Under its rim was a series of cast decorations: two rows of "gourds." [MH: It's Edenic/garden imagery] The rim ("brim") itself was made of lily work. Most amazing of all was the way it was supported on four sets of bronze oxen, with three oxen in each set. Each set of oxen faced a direction of the compass, with their "hinder parts" facing inward and supporting the basin.

This orientation—the oxen, the orientation, with each group of three pointing to a different pointing to a different cardinal point on the compass... This orientation led W. F. Albright to suppose (ala Ezekiel 1 with the cherubim faces—I've commented many times, including on this podcast, about how each of the faces was a cardinal point of the zodiac and that's why they're looking where they're looking)... Albright took this description of the molten sea and its oxen as also referring to the cardinal points of the zodiac. Again, the three groups and different cardinal directions on the compass here... It signified in his mind (this is what he argued in some of his work) that this arrangement signified that the temple was the center of the universe to the Israelite—that this is why it was designed this way. The garden imagery linked it to Eden, which was the first cosmic mountain in biblical theology. 2 Chronicles 4:5 notes that the molten sea had 3,000 baths of water. That's a lot of water! Meyers notes this:

The cultic purpose of this elaborate item among the courtyard appurtenances of the temple is not specified. [MH: In other words, if you go to 2 Chronicles 4:5, it never tells you what you're supposed to do with the water.] Its use as a laver [for

ritual washing] is dubious, since ten bronze lavers, also large and spectacular in design, were also part of the courtyard furnishings.

In other words, that's where the priests were supposed to wash. The molten sea (this huge cast metal thing with the oxen in three groups of four pointing in the cardinal directions)... It's never said that they're supposed to wash in that, whereas the lavers are where they do their washing. So why even have it? Meyers writes this (continuing with her in Anchor Bible Dictionary):

One of the features of ANE temples was their utilization of artistic and architectural elements relating to the idea of the temple as the cosmic center of the world. The great deep, or cosmic waters [MH: remember we're talking about the molten sea and 3,000 baths of water here], is one aspect of the array of cosmic attributes of such a holy spot. The temple of Marduk at Babylon, for example, had an artificial sea (*ta-am-tu*) in its precincts; and some Babylonian temples had an *apsû*- sea, a large basin. Such features symbolize the idea of the ordering of the universe by the conquest of chaos;

Let me just break in there. Remember in Genesis 1, the chaos has to be brought into submission, has to be brought into order and subdued. Genesis 1:2 says the waters were calm and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters. It's this idea that God has to bring the chaotic stuff into order and make this world fit for human habitation. It's this battle against chaos forces to bring them under control so that humans can live in this place. Meyers is saying that the temple symbolized that victory, that same idea that the waters of chaos were now under control and this was the center of the world. Back to Meyers here. She says:

40:00

Such features symbolize the idea of the ordering of the universe by the conquest of chaos; or they represent the presence of the "waters of life" at the holy center. Ancient Israel shared in this notion of watery chaos being subdued by Yahweh and of the temple being built on the cosmic waters [MH: remember the first temple was Eden, which was built on the earth that emerges out of the waters in Genesis 1—the same idea]. The great "molten sea" near the temple's entrance would have signified Yahweh's power and presence.

In other words, it would have signified his control over everything. This is the cosmic center. Now Levenson picks up on the same idea as Meyers so we'll go back to his article. In Ezekiel 43:15, there's a fascinating term that gets obscured, as well, in English. We have the reference to the "base on the ground" (the bosom of the earth) of this altar, and then in verse 15, we have, "and the altar hearth was four cubits." This is going to be mind-blowing, I think, for some. In Hebrew, "altar hearth" is the term *ha har'el* (הַהַרְאֵל)—literally "the mountain of El" or "the mountain of God." Levenson notes here about the term (with the definite article removed):

[The term *har'el*] in the same passage [Ezekiel 43:15] is to be connected with Akkadian *arallu*, a term for the netherworld, about which the Chicago Assyrian Dictionary remarks that it was *inter alia*, a "cosmic locality opposite of heaven"...

In other words, this location where the *ha har'el* is situated (the altar hearth, the altar that's the bosom of the earth in Ezekiel 43) is the earthly counterpart to heaven—to the cosmic dwelling of God. Back to Levenson:

We should note, as does Albright, that the ancient Israelites may have understood this term as "mountain of God" (*har'el*), which is a concept no less cosmic.

In other words, they may not have understood it as this netherworld (this oppositional point) but then he says that's no less cosmic. I agree. This is how the altar of this temple is referred to—the bosom of the earth and the *ha har'el*. Again, these terms are loaded with theological, cosmic significance.

Levenson goes on in his article to quote from another article by Moshe Wienfeld. I think that article was in modern Hebrew. I don't have this article, but getting the citation, I think this is the case. Wienfeld examined the creation story of Genesis 2 (I'm just going to summarize it). He compares the creation story of Genesis 2 to the description of the building of the tabernacle in Exodus 39 and 40. You say, "Why would he even think of doing that?" Here's how Levenson summarizes Wienfeld's study. For those of you who have read John Walton's book, *The Lost World of Genesis 1*, where Walton argues (and I think he argues it well, in my view) that the creation account is really about Yahweh's construction of the heavens and earth as a cosmic temple-building project... This is going to sound very familiar. Walton is building on something Wienfeld was tracking on. So Levenson summarizes what's going on here this way:

Wienfeld's thesis is that 'the priesthood in Israel actualized by means of the Sabbath the completion of the acts of creation in the same way that the peoples of the ancient Near East actualized in their cultic dramas the primordial event. Whereas in the Babylonian creation epic, the Enuma Elish, the construction of the Temple of Marduk, Esagila, crowns and consummates creation, the Sabbath does the same in Israel. Thus, we should not be surprised to find that the texts describing the creation of the world and those describing the construction of a shrine are parallel.

Wienfeld has a bunch of parallels in his article, and so does Levenson, between the two accounts, both in vocabulary and phrases. If you get Levenson's article (if you're a newsletter subscriber), you'll see a little table in the article about these parallels. He's saying we shouldn't be surprised there are parallels between Genesis 2 and the building of the tabernacle.

---

45:00

The Temple and the world stand in an intimate and intrinsic connection. The two projects cannot ultimately be distinguished or disengaged. Each recounts how God brought about an environment in which he can find 'rest.' According to Exod. 20:11, 'He rested [*wayanah*] on the seventh day'; Ps. 132:8 calls on him to rise from his 'rest' (*menuḥa*), identified as the Ark (verse 6) and the Tabernacle (verse 7). The Sabbath and the sanctuary represent the same moment in the divine life, one of exaltation and regal repose, a moment free of anxiety... 1 Kings 6:38b tells us that it took Solomon seven years to build his Temple [MH: **coincidental number, right?**]. According to 1 Kings 8, he dedicated it during the Feast of Booths (Sukkot), which occurs in the seventh month (verse 2) and which, in Deuteronomic tradition, is a festival of seven days' duration (Deut. 16:13-15). Moreover, the speech in which Solomon dedicates his shrine, just completed, is structured around seven petitions (1 Kings 8:31-55). Can the significance of the number seven be coincidence?

His answer is no, it's not coincidence. Just to summarize this particular point, there are connections between the way the altar and the temple are talked about in Ezekiel 40-48 that have distinct, important links to the cosmic mountain motif—the cosmic mountain concept—of the rest of the Hebrew Bible. I would ask with Levenson, is that coincidence? No, I don't think so. But if you're reading these chapters with only a literal structure in mind and you're not tracking on the wider metaphor of the cosmic mountain and the symbology of these elements, you are going to miss all of that. You're going to miss all of it. When it comes to the New Testament, think about where we've been to this point in the episode. Let's apply New Testament temple-talk to what we just read about the molten sea and the bosom of the earth and the *ha har'el* and all this Akkadian stuff—the idea that the temple was focused on the center of the earth, the cosmic center, and there's a parallel between the creation story and the building of the tabernacle so that Yahweh rests at the end (seven year periods)... Let's take all of that and now marry it to New Testament temple-talk where we began our episode. I just wrote out a few points. Just think about this.

1. The Body of Christ is the temple. We are his body, in whom dwells the glory-Spirit of God. Our rest is in Christ. Period. He is our Sabbath rest.
2. We are, therefore, the current cosmic mountain—the *already* cosmic mountain, the place on earth where God dwells and through which he runs his program. This, of course, is the restoration of Eden. The integral point to that is the Gospel.
3. The future (we're the already, but the "not yet") cosmic mountain is the New Jerusalem, in which there is no temple (Revelation 21:22 says that explicitly). There's no temple. Why is there no temple? Because it's been

replaced by the Lord Almighty and the Lamb returned to earth—the Lamb of God, Jesus, who is the temple (back in John and other passages).

4. This New Jerusalem is also the New Zion, the cosmic mountain made Edenic. It is the center of the global Eden.

50:00

If Old Testament temple-talk points to the temple being the cosmic center, what the New Testament described (doing so in far more than literal terms) points to precisely the same idea. We are already the cosmic mountain. We are the temple. We are the central thing... The body of Christ is the central thing through which God works out his decrees, his plan, for humanity—and that is to restore Eden. We are the agents of that program. So we are the "already" cosmic center awaiting the "not yet" cosmic center—the return of Jesus, who is the temple, and the ushering in of the New Jerusalem in a global Eden.

All these ideas should be familiar to this audience. They all dovetail here. I'm hoping you're seeing how things just sort of come full circle. There are parts of Ezekiel 40-48 that draw on this same set of ideas. Temple language is not just about "pass me the brick and mortar." There's so much more to it than a physical construction of a physical structure. An Israelite would have looked at the temple in very abstract, conceptually significant ways. What we're suggesting here is that Ezekiel 40-48 brings these concepts with it, brings it along and so it's a misreading of Ezekiel 40-48 to *only* think of a physical structure.

Now we're at our fourth point. I think this one is going to be quite new to people, but it's really neat (laughing). I don't know how else to say it; it's just really cool. I'm going to refer to Bergsma's article here: "The Restored Temple as 'Built Jubilee' in Ezek 40-48." I've also put this article in the protected folder for newsletter subscribers so you can read it. It's fascinating. Let's just start off here by talking about Jubilee. I have Harper's Bible Dictionary open. It has just a couple of sentences here on Jubilee that I think are good for us to hear as we go into this.

[Jubilee refers to] the fiftieth year occurring at the end of seven Sabbatical cycles of seven years each, in which all land was returned to its ancestral owners and all Israelite slaves were freed. The Jubilee is described in Lev. 25:8-17, 23-55; 27:16-25; and Num. 36:4. It was proclaimed with the blowing of the shophar (trumpet made from a ram's horn) on the Day of Atonement. (Hebrew *yovel*, 'Jubilee,' takes its name from the ram's horn.)

Anchor Bible Dictionary is a different article and has one sentence on the same thing. It says:

The year of jubilee came at the end of the cycle of 7 Sabbatical Years. Lev 25:8–10 specifies it as the 50th year.

I'm going to read Leviticus 25:8-10:

**<sup>8</sup>“You shall count seven weeks of years, seven times seven years, so that the time of the seven weeks of years shall give you forty-nine years. <sup>9</sup> Then you shall sound the loud trumpet on the tenth day of the seventh month. On the Day of Atonement you shall sound the trumpet throughout all your land. <sup>10</sup> And you shall consecrate the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout the land to all its inhabitants. It shall be a jubilee for you, when each of you shall return to his property and each of you shall return to his clan.**

With that as a backdrop, let's go into Bergsma a little bit. Bergsma writes this up-front here. He says:

The purpose of this paper is to pick up and develop a suggestion originally made by Walter Zimmerli—one of the greatest modern commentators on Ezekiel—that the dimensions of the restored Temple envisioned by the prophet in Ezekiel 40-48 were focused around the number fifty, and that the number fifty symbolized the Israelite institution of the jubilee, the “year of liberation” which was to be celebrated every fifty years... My intention in what follows is to develop the argument that Ezekiel builds his temple on jubilee dimensions, and to explore the theological implications of such a proposal for the understanding of Ezekiel’s vision of restoration in chs. 40-48.

That's what Bergsma is trying to do in the article. It's fascinating. He starts off with the very first verse of Ezekiel 40-48. That's Ezekiel 40:1. So let's just go to Ezekiel 40:1. This, of course, is going to be the date. I'll read the verse.

**In the twenty-fifth year of our exile, at the beginning of the year, on the tenth day of the month, in the fourteenth year after the city was struck down, on that very day, the hand of the LORD was upon me, and he brought me to the city.**

55:00

In Part 1, I read something to set up the “temple as Jubilee” idea. In Part 1, I actually gave you the wrong source. I thought it was Bergsma but it was actually an article by a guy named Greenberg, on page 190. (We've corrected the transcript.) I'm going to read it again. It's about Ezekiel 40:1. Greenberg said this:

Mention of the destruction of the city (Jerusalem) in the opening date formula (40:1) presages the antithesis between the following vision and the awful event it was meant to remedy. Was the date significant? We know of no event in the year

25 of the exile (571 B CE.) with which to connect this vision; but 25 years is half a jubilee ("the year of release," 46:17), and the number and its double, 50, and multiples thereof (100, 500, 5,000, 10,000, 25,000) recur ahead in measurements of the Temple and the land.

That's an understatement—"recur ahead." I'm actually going to give you the stats on how many times these multiples occur. But before we get there... We're getting a little ahead of ourselves here. Given the fact that no significant event in biblical history is associated with the city that corresponds to the date given in Ezekiel 40:1, Bergsma says this:

The phrase 'the twenty-fifth year of our exile' begs to be interpreted symbolically, but twenty-five is neither a common nor symbolic number in the Hebrew Bible. The best—and perhaps only—suggestion for its significance has been as half of a jubilee cycle of fifty years.

That's page 76. Let's skip a little bit. He continues:

If this indeed is the symbolic significance of Ezekiel's chronological marker, it accords well with the interpretation of the return from exile as a jubilee event also found, for example, in Isa 61:1-4 [MH: **that's the passage Jesus quotes in the synagogue in Nazareth**]... The identification of twenty-five years as half a jubilee is strengthened by the phrase [MH: **catch this**] "at the beginning of the year, on the tenth day of the month." ... *[T]he only other passage in the Hebrew Bible which indicates that the year began on the tenth day of the month is Lev 25:9-10, in which the jubilee year (and, I would argue, the cultic/agricultural year in general) began in the seventh month (Tishri) on the tenth day of the month, the Day of Atonement. Why the year would begin on the tenth day of the month has been the occasion for some discussion, but there is reason to think that the first nine or ten days of Tishri were a New Year's festival and considered "liminal time"—neither the old year nor the new [MH: **kind of this in-between period**]. The New Year began in earnest only at the end of the festival, the Day of Atonement. Thus, Ezekiel seems to be following the old "ecclesiastical" calendar represented in the Holiness Code, in which the cultic year begins on the tenth of Tishri... *Only the association with the jubilee year text (Lev 25:8-10) makes meaningful sense of both the figure of 'twenty-five years' and the 'beginning of the year' on the 'tenth day of the month'.**

This is the only thing it can correspond to. He adds in a footnote that the tenth day of the month was also the start of the watch of the Passover lamb (Exodus 12:3). His source for the new year's festival thing (liminal time) is Jonathan Safren, "Jubilee and the Day of Atonement," and it's in a book I don't have (*Proceedings of the 12th World Congress of Jewish Studies: Division A: The*

*Bible and Its World*, published in 1999). If you ever find that, buy it because it's really hard to find. I don't have access to it.

1:00:00

But I just have to stop here and tie this "already" to Jesus. We're just barely into this. His body is the temple and he is the king of the final cosmic mountain. Do you see the implications of what Bergsma has just noted? He's arguing that the date in Ezekiel 40:1 deliberately takes the hearer's ear back to the beginning of the Jubilee cycle. Specifically, the seventh month (Tishri). These are the only two passages in the Hebrew Bible to use the phrase, "At the beginning of the year, the tenth day of the month," which was Tishri 10. In terms of the relationship of the Jubilee year and the Day of Atonement, a new year celebration would precede the Day of Atonement and the Jubilee year began actually on Tishri 1. Let me rephrase that a little bit. The reference to the tenth day of the month is Tishri 10. But if it's correct that Tishri 1 (and we know that this is correct because of the ecclesiastical calendar in the Hebrew Bible) that the year actually began on Tishri 1 and they had this celebration. Then after Tishri 10, they'd have the Day of Atonement and that was like the ecclesiastical beginning of the year because the Day of Atonement was the reset for everybody. You hit the reset button. Everybody's in right relationship to Yahweh.

So Tishri 1 actually begins the calendar year, but then at the end of Tishri 10 is when you have the Day of Atonement and then you get the Jubilee year beginning then. Look at all those things that are together: Day of Atonement, New Year's Day, Tishri 1. Where have we seen Tishri 1 before on this podcast? It's the birthday of Jesus: September 11, 3 B.C., on Tishri 1. Tishri 1 was the ceremonial date, as well, for the inauguration of a new king. The birth of Jesus, of course, signaled an end to the exile and the coming atonement. Why else would he come? Jesus was the Passover lamb.

Remember the note here that Bergsma had on all of this with the tenth day of the seventh month... On this calendar (associated with the Jubilee), that's also when they began to start looking for the Passover lamb. And, of course, Jesus is the new temple. We're the new temple because we're united to him when we become members of his body! Could it be that the temple description, by virtue of this date in Ezekiel 40:1 and the cosmic mountain imagery found elsewhere in the chapters... Could it be... Could it be that Ezekiel 40-48 foreshadows all of that? It foreshadows (by virtue of its association with Tishri and the Jubilee) the coming of a new king on Tishri 1, a king who would bring atonement and who was the Passover lamb.

You say, "Mike that's just kind of bizarre. That's just reading a lot in to Ezekiel 40-48. *Is it?* Because all of these ideas would have been floating around in the head of an Israelite. All of them. The only thing that's missing is the actual person who would play the role of the Passover lamb, who would play the role of the new king, who would be the temple (the place where the presence of God dwelled). That's the only thing that's missing. The idea of a person, a man, who was

actually God incarnate in whom the fullness of the Godhead (the glory of the temple) dwelled. That is the only missing element to all of this. That's the thing that they lacked. It's the thing that the Israelite readers of Ezekiel 40-48 lacked. They have everything else. They have the association with Jubilee. They have the association with Tishri 1 and Tishri 10 and the Day of Atonement and the Passover lamb. They have every blasted piece of it—if you read Ezekiel 40-48 abstractly like this. The only thing missing is the person who brings all of the threads together. I'm telling you the Tishri 1 birthday of Jesus of Nazareth would have been a big deal. Anybody who knew that—who did the math and fit that together, who knew about the narrative with the magi... We don't know how many people knew this. John gives us this information in Revelation 12 (reading that as astral prophecy). We don't know who had all these threads and put them together, but John did and the New Testament did. The only thing missing to the Israelite is who does this. Where do the threads all meet? That was the mystery.

You know where I'm going with this. It was deliberate! You're not supposed to know this until after the fact because had the rulers of this world known what was going on, they would never have killed him! It's all part of the same matrix of ideas.

Let's go back to the temple vision. We are not done. Bergsma is tracking on this Jubilee idea and the number 25 (half a Jubilee) and the number 50 of the Jubilee is important. Get a load of this: scholars have noted the numbers and dimensions of the temple are consistently multiples of 25 and 50. So half a Jubilee and a Jubilee. These are just the stats. This is like more than three or four times.

1:05:00

- The number 25 shows up eight times in chapters 40-48.
- The number 10 shows up ten times.
- The number 100 shows up thirteen times.
- The number 250 is four times.
- The number 500 is eight times.
- The number 1,000 is four times.
- The number 5,000 is two times.
- The number 10,000 is seven times.
- The number 25,000 is fourteen times.

You have *sixty* references to Jubilee numbers and their multiples in Ezekiel 40-48. To echo Levenson, is that coincidence?

Further, the number 500 is ten Jubilees. Scholars have noted that here in Ezekiel you have 10 times 50 (ten Jubilee cycles) and, of course, going back to Leviticus. The same collective cycle of Jubilees occurs, as well, in Daniel 9, but in there the number 49 is used (49 times 10 for the weeks of Daniel 9 and all that stuff = 490 years). The concept of ten Jubilees is present in both books, they're just using different numbers (50 and 49, respectively). The concept of ten Jubilee cycles is

also present in *1 Enoch* and 11QMelchizedek. I've mentioned 11QMelchizedek before. Both of those texts (we'll get into it a little bit more when we get to our episodes on Melchizedek), but both of those books (of course, 11QMelchizedek is just a manuscript) have the tenth Jubilee marking the end of exile.

11QMelchizedek specifically associates the end of the exile with Isaiah 61. It actually quotes Isaiah 61 (the release of captivity)—the same passage Jesus quotes of himself at Nazareth. 11QMelchizedek also associates the one who marked the Jubilee cycle with the *elohim* figure of Psalm 82:1. There's something going on here in the Jewish mind about these Jubilee cycles. If we're taking the New Testament at face value, it all converges in a person, and that person is Jesus of Nazareth, who *is* the temple, according to the Gospel of John and some of the other passages we read, too.

Bergsma (just one more quote from him and then we're going to wrap up) adds this:

Even the total area of the Holy City does not depart from being a multiple of fifty. At first, this is not obvious, since the dimensions of the city walls are given as being 4,500 cubits on a side (48:16). The number 4,500 is indeed a multiple of fifty, but not a very attractive one—the more obvious candidate being a round five thousand (the jubilee of fifty times one hundred). However, when one is careful to include the common pasture land which extends 250 cubits around the city on all sides (48:17), one finds that the prophetic author has indeed allowed five thousand cubits on a side for the entire holy city, including pasturage, as Ezek 48:15 makes clear. (page 78)

Admittedly, it is not possible to *prove* that the jubilee was the inspiration for these dimensions. I would suggest, however, that the likelihood for such being the case is enhanced when we recognize that the jubilee dimensions of the temple fit into a larger pattern of allusions or references to the jubilee throughout the book of Ezekiel. Though space prohibits careful analysis of all the texts, Ezek 7:12-13; 11:14-15; 18:8, 13, 17; 22:12; and 34:4 all contain language that seems to be taken from the jubilee legislation of Lev 25, providing some corroborative evidence that the prophetic author is familiar with this text. (page 79)

1:10:00

I would say, "Yeah. Yeah, he is. He is." Again, sixty references to Jubilee numbers and their multiples—*sixty!*—in these eight chapters. Is that coincidental? I would say, based on the theology that's packed into the connection back to the Jubilee, I don't think it's coincidental. I think this is foreshadowing. I think it's intelligent, prophetic rhetoric going on here. They don't have all the answers, Again, what they're missing is the person in whom all of these threads converge. We know who that was and we know from the New Testament how the birth and the life and the death and the resurrection and the ascension of Christ dovetail with Jubilee language. Again, he is the temple.

So I would say this to conclude: If one reads Ezekiel 40-48 in a way that a) transcends literalism and b) gives credence to the way Ezekiel repurposes cosmic mountain ideas and the Jubilee of Leviticus 25, then you get fascinating conceptual and theological connections between the temple vision and Jesus, whose body was the temple... and his birthday and the atonement and believers as members of that body. I just don't think this is coincidental. I think it's authorial foreshadowing and, in terms of the New Testament writers, it's insight into that foreshadowing after the fact of the crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension. Given the problems with the literal view (if we go back to Part 1 of this)... Given the problems the literal view creates for theology and for interpretation just generally, I personally have little doubt that the non-literal approach is better and, frankly, contributes more to the matrix of biblical theology across the testaments.

**TS:** I've said it once and I'll say it again, Mike. We need to find a way to jump-start Jubilee.

**MH:** (laughing) Well, it's already, but not yet.

**TS:** There you go. I wanted to go back to Part 1. Any thoughts of who the actual prince is?

**MH:** I would kind of agree... It's really interesting because if you go back to Part 1, part of Bigg's article... He tries to abstract this so there's still a messianic connection, but yet he's not a priest. He's making what the priesthood does possible. If you look at that description and you say, "Okay, there is some Davidic connection here," the only way that you can sort of get to Jesus, I think, with some success is to merge this figure with the priest. We have that in Jesus. It's not perfect because you have sort of an apolitical Jesus, but I'll just say this: If you place all of that language in the context of the atonement (that's the "already" part), but the return of Christ and then the New Jerusalem at the end of days (Revelation 21 and 22, the global Eden, and all that stuff), everything is his anyway. In other words, you don't need a political system to keep things in line. It's already, by definition, in line. And the political system actually is sort of accrued because of his presence. And we're part of that because we're his body and we're over the nations and all that sort of thing.

I think you can take all of this information and merge them into Christ through different roots. I would never say that an Israelite could get that without knowledge of who the messiah was and the whole talk about the nations and all that stuff. You have to bring a number of threads together to get there, but I think you *could*, very abstractly.

The reason I mention that is the Jewish expectation... I think this is part of why they expected sort of two figures and not just one. There are places where Jewish expectation is two messiahs or a messianic figure from a different tribe

other than David (Joseph and stuff like this). I think they were trying to see how a descendent of David who wasn't a priest but had some relationship to a priesthood, how this could all fit. So they were postulating more than one figure, whereas, by virtue of the New Testament and its usage of things like the Melchizedek priesthood and Psalm 110 and the whole idea of the atonement and recovering the nations... If you're reading these things through that lens, you can get there by virtue of abstracting the concept. So is it Jesus or is it not Jesus? I think a better argument is to be made that this is still Jesus but you can't get there with a literal reading of Ezekiel 40-48. You can get there with a conceptual, symbolic, abstract reading of that passage and then bringing other passages in to explain the language of those eight chapters. That's the way I would approach it. It's not a simple yes or no answer. To me, it's a "yes" with very specific qualifications. I can say this with confidence: you cannot get to Jesus with a literal reading for the prince. You just can't do it. There are too many disconnects.

**TS:** All right, Mike. Well, just like that, we're done! How does it feel?

**MH:** Yeah. I think over the next few days I'll probably miss Ezekiel, but I can also look at our calendar and see what we're going to cover next. We're going to be doing topics like we did last time in between having people decide where we should go park for awhile in terms of a book. But we've got a lot of other stuff to cover that I think will be really interesting.

**TS:** Actually, you're going to tell us next week where the Ark of the Covenant actually is, right?

**MH:** (laughing) Yeah, I'll put photos of my house because years ago there was a tunnel under my house. So that's where the Ark is right there. It's right at the border. It's on the U.S. side under my house to make it all legal. We'll have pictures in the next episode.

**TS:** But we're actually covering the Ark of the Covenant.

**MH:** We're going to cover the different theories as to what happened to it. This sort of grew out of the reference... I can't even remember what episode it was, but there was a reference to Jeremiah about the Ark of the Covenant. We thought it was worth an episode, so that's what we'll do next time.

**TS:** And everybody needs to watch *Raiders of the Lost Ark* in preparation for the next episode. (laughter)

**MH:** That's only one theory. That's only one of several. Yeah, that's the coolest one!

**TS:** All right, Mike. We are done, so congratulations! I certainly appreciate it. I learned a ton.

**MH:** Yeah, I thought it was fun, too. It was long in the middle, but this is what we do here. We're not really going to care about the length of the episodes and the length of a series. We're just going to try to be useful. I think it was.

**TS:** We appreciate it. Just like that! I want to thank everybody for listening to the Naked Bible Podcast! God bless.