

WHY STUDY EZEKIEL 40-48 ?

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MR. MACKAY'S qualities as a student of Ezekiel are well known. In this article he has some unusually exciting suggestions to make, not least with regard to the affinities between the last nine chapters of Ezekiel and the Epistle to the Hebrews.

THE short answer is that it is in the Bible. Nevertheless this temple-vision is a specialistic study which the average reader may forgo without evident loss. One may respond to the challenge of a sizable section of Scripture left on the shelf, but a tentative approach is not apt to be rewarding: chapters 40-42 are occupied with temple-measurements, an architectural jigsaw which commentaries reveal as a practicable ground-plan, yet just that and nothing more; 43-46 are largely devoted to ceremonial, appreciation of which asks familiarity with Mosaic ritual; in 47: 1-12 a mystic river brings a gleam of sunshine, but thereafter we are fog-bound in the division of the land, matter-of-fact enough, but generally regarded, in odd contrast to the temple-plan, as nebulous.

After twenty-five centuries the issue of study not content, like the critical school, to treat the vision as an abortive ideal may be summed up as rather acrimonious debate between literal and symbolic interpretation. The first, of course, does not exclude the second: the Mosaic tabernacle was both literal and highly symbolic. Contrariwise, the second, while rejecting literal fulfilment, cannot decline a practical approach. That is to say, to tackle the vision verse by verse and try to take symbolically "thirteen cubits", "hooks an handbreadth long", "the sixth part of an ephah", place-names like Berothah and Hauran, is "out of the question", "to contradict all reason".¹ The essential of "general consent as naturally typifying or representing"² is absent. One must grasp the whole picture before seeking inner meaning in details. As Fairbairn puts it in a passage which might be text for this disquisition, "Even if the plan had been fitted and designed for being actually reduced to practice, it would still have been principally with a view to its being a mirror, in which to see reflected the

¹ Beasley-Murray, *New Bible Comm.*, p. 663b; Davidson, *Cambridge Bible*, p. 314.

² *Concise Oxford Dictionary*, s.v. "symbol".

mind and purposes of God. But if so, why might not the delineation itself be made to serve for such a mirror?"

Thus the orthodox Fairbairn and A. B. Davidson, who does not entertain the question of fulfilment, agree that the essential is to take everything literally, natural or supernatural, and ask, "What is the main conception expressed?"³ Such approach is in line with a current view of revelation as "creating in inspired minds the images by which the truth about God's saving action is apprehended, expressed and communicated."⁴ From this viewpoint opposing ecclesiastical quarters join in seeing the vision as "a true prediction of the kingdom of God given under the forms with which the prophet was familiar," "a figurative adumbration in Jewish colouring of the Messianic kingdom, the Church of Christ."⁵ But it is not enough to say this: one must show it, and so further study is demanded, for no treatment known to the present writer could convince Jew or sceptic that here is a picture of the Church—and even the devout Christian may be rebuffed by the apparently Messianic figure of the "prince" who is a fallible mortal.

The literalist, of course, faces the same perplexity plus complications in actual sacrifices and the supernatural element. In fairness to this position it may be noted that neither sacrifices nor Shekinah could have affected Ezekiel's own view of the vision's intention. For him offerings for the purifying of precincts and flesh (cf. Heb. 9: 13) would have been bound up with the approach to the Glory's dwelling of throngs liable to indecorum and *faux pas* in general (45: 20); and even his miraculous stream has down-to-earth touches—fishers from Engedi to Eneglaim, marshes retained to supply salt. This dangerous ground may be skirted by recalling what might be termed Akiba's Law: "In the characteristic manner of theological partisanship, Akiba speaks with most confident decision on the points where he knew his case to be weakest."⁶ "Absolutely incapable of literal fulfilment" (W. L. Baxter), "absolute clearness" of practical intention (W. R. Smith), "a most loathsome work" to "dig up the ceremonies" (Increase Mather), "this licentious and deluding art which changes the meaning of words" (Hooker) are modes of expression better toned down while searching the milieu of the returned Chariot for what the New

³ Fairbairn, *Ezekiel: An Exposition* (1851), p. 400; Davidson, p. 315.

⁴ Richardson, *Bible in Age of Science*, p. 161, citing Austin Farrer.

⁵ *New Bible Comm.*, p. 664a; *Catholic Comm.*, p. 492a, giving "traditional interpretation".

⁶ W. Robertson Smith, *O.T. in Jewish Church*, pp. 173f. Rabbi Akiba was pronouncing on the canonicity of the Song of Solomon.

Testament reveals as the mind of God.

If orthodoxy, baulking at potentialities of *odium theologicum*, is content with pious generalities, the field is left to the critical school. The question then arises whether Ezekiel's simple ritual may not be earlier than the Mosaic. In the former there is no 10th Tishri or annual Atonement-day,⁷ and in the historical books it is also absent: the deduction can be that "the Day" *par excellence* of Jewry is of post-Exilic establishment. Again, Ezekiel makes a decisive distinction between priests and Levites, such as is not previously recognized in historical praxis: the conclusion may be that, consequent on Josiah's abolition of the local high places, our prophet as a priest of Jerusalem asserted the superior status of the temple's priesthood (44: 10-16), and the Law followed suit, substituting Aaron for Zadok. Further, he gives prominence to the secular ruler or "prince", thus apparently building, not on the Law, but on monarchic conditions. The absence of high priest in 40-48 is also used to suggest that this office is purely post-Exilic; but here, since there are too many chief priests, from Eleazar to Seraiah, to be explained away, the critics seem to have the wrong angle, a possibility strengthened by the absence from Ezekiel's temple of the ark, the undoubted focus of historical praxis. Yet there remains—and reigns—a plausible hypothesis that our prophet first wrote down the ritual later developed into the Priestly Code, the general aim being to further the centralization of worship at Moriah. His vision is then seen as "the fountainhead of both legalism and apocalypse," "the key of the Old Testament," the pivot round which the history of Israel's worship has been turned⁸; and to answer the critics one must be as familiar with its terms as they are.

It is therefore inadequate to maintain that Ezekiel "prophesied of the grace that should come unto you" (1 Pet. 1: 10) and leave 40-48 as passing all understanding, "a closed door . . . a labyrinth of divine mysteries" (Jerome), "a midnight journey" (Gregory the Great), "through unknown, pathless places, no end in sight" (Andrew of St. Victor), "treasures hid in the sand" (A. Bonar)—much as the Rabbis viewed these chapters as holding secrets to be elucidated only when Elijah reappears. But the New Testament suggests that no previous seer, not Ezekiel himself, could assist:

⁷ Unless in the date of the vision; cf. Rabbi Fisch, *Soncino Books*, on 40: 1: "The beginning of the Jubilee year, which is also the Day of Atonement . . . was thus a most appropriate day for the vision."

⁸ Pfeiffer, *Books of O.T.*, p. 60; Wellhausen, *History of Israel*, p. 421; cf. pp. 59f.

“not unto themselves, but unto you, did they minister these things.” Neither does it afford ground for placing Ezekiel in a different category from Isaiah or Zechariah: “all the prophets” were expounded by the risen Lord (Luke 24: 25, 27), and so the apostles preached, “To him give all the prophets witness” (Acts 10: 43). The same “voice of one that spake” is heard in the Old Testament “son of man” and in the Son (Heb. 1: 1f.), and the challenge is to demonstrate that Moses has been left behind by the herald of the covenant of peace who bore the insignia of “sign” and “son of man”.

The critical attitude is not the only facet of the contemporary scene which brings the vision into the foreground. The establishment of the State of Israel, forced upon Jewry by pressures which earlier theologians failed to anticipate, causes rethinking of the “spiritual” understanding of repatriation. Is it possible to believe in a national conversion, and yet envisage the nation without territory, without Zion? The question is becoming academic: any roseate prospect for Israel involves like prospect for Palestine. “In the place (ἐν τῷ τόπῳ) where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people, there (ἐκε) shall they be called sons of the living God” (Rom. 9: 26). Here again 40-48 is the key, particularly the final chapter, to whose practicality even Isaiah’s poetry must defer. To dismiss the land-division as nebulous suggests that the commentator (whose arithmetic is sometimes a weak point) has not bothered to test it on the map. The plan’s viability is what might be expected from the source of the painstaking temple-measurements and meticulous boundaries. It does not involve recognition of the lost ten tribes, for Ezekiel—in accord with his foresight of “one stick” (37: 19) and with the present situation wherein Jews, apart from Levites, have no certainty on tribal affiliation, since the blood of many tribes mingles in their veins—directs that the people, exclusive of Levites, shall be assigned to their portions “by lot”.¹⁰ Even a rebuilt temple is not outside practical politics. Orthodox Jewry has never ceased to pray for this, and developments would surely follow recovery of the Haram site. Though not adapted to

⁹ Cf. Ellison, *Ezekiel: The Man and His Message*, pp. 124ff.: “The transformation of Israel on the earthly level must be preceded by the transformation of the land. . . . In 47: 13-20 it is clear that God’s original giving holds good”.

¹⁰ 45: 1; 47: 22; 48: 29 A.V., R.V., American-Jewish trans. Βολεῖτε αὐτήν ἐν κλήρῳ, “ye shall cast the lot upon it,” LXX of 47: 22; cf. 48: 29. The equal geometrical portions themselves leave no room for determination by lot. The Levites are treated as an identifiable body, 44: 10.

its topography (cf. 40: 2) Ezekiel's plan is the blueprint to hand ; and if there were question of its being consulted it would not do to protest this a temple of the new covenant without demonstrating it.

Lines of proof are suggested *supra* in the absence of high priest, mercy-seat, and Atonement-day, to which can be added that of paschal lamb and meal in 45: 21-24. Rabbi Dr. Fisch understands passages in the second person singular, "Thou shalt" do so-and-so, as appointing Ezekiel to act as high priest :¹¹ allied with his constant nomenclature as "son of man", this indication that the priest-prophet is a stand-in for some star figure turns one's thoughts to the Charioteer, the "likeness as the appearance of a man" (1: 26) who made Ezekiel his representative. Thence it is a short step to the argument of Hebrews on Jesus as the son of man crowned with glory and honour, appointed high priest after the order of Melchizedek, and seated in the heavenlies as one who need make no more offering for sin. Our prophet, despite any supervisory rôle, is not given the essential prerogatives of the Law's high priest, to consult Urim and Thummim, and to bring blood into the temple-house. In the vision no method of inquiring the divine will is stipulated, and the nearest approach with blood is to the house's outer doorposts (45: 19), while within is no depository for blood, neither ark, veil, nor incense-altar—nor, for that matter, equivalent of the post-Exilic "foundation-stone".

Hence it appears that while the Law adumbrated the blessings to come, Ezekiel may claim "the very *eikon* of the realities" (Heb. 10: 1), and that by deploying the psalms in conjunction so as to assert a for-ever priest "come to do thy will" (vv. 9ff.) we may, in face of both modernist and Jewish viewpoints, hold fast the profession of our faith. Nevertheless the negative evidence needs to be supplemented, and at first sight positive connection with Melchizedek's order seems non-existent. Three points may encourage us to "draw near in full assurance": the palm-tree emblem of the temple is as much Phoenician or Canaanite as Israelite ; the priests are "the sons of Zadok (Righteous)" under "a covenant of peace" (34: 25 ; 37: 26), while Melchizedek is king of righteousness and peace ; and, thirdly, the sanctuary is in the Salem ("peace") district. This last point is pivotal, for if Ezekiel planned for the "place" of Melchizedek a temple without high priest and with on south or right hand (cf. 47: 1f.) a city named "The Lord is there," his *eikon* embodies the theology of Ps. 110 and so of the Epistle to the Hebrews.

¹¹ See *Evangelical Quarterly*, Jan.-March, 1960, p. 20, note 30.

Two convergent lines of study are needed to bring together Salem and the temple-site. English translations leave the former's locality debatable, but the Greek version shows it not Jerusalem but near Shechem.¹² On this problem the Septuagint is (apart from the indecisive original) our oldest authority and also our safest, since it can, unlike identifications with Jerusalem, be acquitted of bias; there is further the compelling point that it was, as quotations in Hebrews prove, the text-book of that Epistle's circle, so that Shechem's witness is intrinsic to the contrast of Salem's priesthood with the Aaronic. Such involvement harmonizes with the original ignoring of Jerusalem in favour of Shechem, the "place" or sanctuary where Abraham built his first altar (Gen. 12: 6f.), the indigenous "navel of the land" (Judg. 9: 37), supposed to link earth with heaven, like Delphi, and the statutory "sanctuary of Jehovah" (Josh 24: 26). The Authorized Version unfortunately renders the same Hebrew word "Salem" in Gen. 14: 18 but "Shalem" in 33: 18, yet supports the Septuagint evidence that Jacob built Israel's first altar, El-Elohe-Israel, at "Salem, a city of Shechem," so that Salem's destiny blends with Joshua's national altar on Ebal, with the scene of blessing or cursing where Shechem lay interposed, with the amazingly persistent witness of the Samaritans to the primal sanctuary, and with the Gospel kindness to those self-styled "Keepers", focusing on the rendezvous at Jacob's Well.

Turning to the land-plan we find the salient feature the separation of temple from city, not an entirely novel idea: it could be said to have been in mind from the beginning, bound up with the choice of Zion, for when the ark first rested there the tabernacle and altar remained at Gibeon with Zadok in charge. Thus Ezekiel's sanctuary and city in their oblation-tabernacle under auspices of Zadok and "David" recall the "tabernacle of David" expected by prophets and acknowledged by apostles,¹³ while such separation is taken for granted in a New Testament book steeped in Ezekielian ideology, viz. in Rev. 11 and 20.¹⁴ Inclination to juggle with the directions so as to bring temple and city together should therefore be discouraged. The tenor of the vision is towards

¹² *Palestine Exploration Quarterly*, July-Oct., 1948, p. 121. See LXX, Gen. 33: 18; Ps. 76 (75): 2; Jer. 41 (48): 5; Judith 4: 4.

¹³ See *E.Q.*, l.c. p. 21 with note 32; Ezek. 34: 23f.; 37: 24-28; 44: 15.

¹⁴ Rev. 11: 1f., in context of little book and measuring reed, distinguishes temple and altar from city. 20: 9, in context of Gog and Magog, separates millennial camp τῶν ἁγίων from city (as Greek makes clear). Cf. "David", Rev. 3: 7; 5: 5; 22: 16.

safeguarding the sanctity of the Glory's dwelling as centre of the plan,¹⁵ while Jerusalem stands well off-centre and fits the siting of Ezekiel's city, not in any case to be lightly dissociated from the city of David, the Zion of Ps. 110: 2, "Mount Zion and the city of the living God" (Heb. 12: 22 N.E.B.).

What then is the distance between temple and city? In attempt to close the gap modern commentaries place the priests' or sanctuary portion next to the city. But this is unsupported apart from adhesion of temple to Moriah. The order of portions from north to south is Judah-priests-Levites-city-prince-Benjamin. Further, if the oblation's most holy and holy sections obey the tabernacle pattern, citizens should proceed through the Levites' or holy portion to the priests' or most holy. Again, the prince's cross-country strip must extend north into the coastal and eastern triangles left by the square oblation (45: 7), so that in 48: 22 Levites and city are particularized as "in the midst of" (i.e., interior in) the Judah-Benjamin perspective of the royal domain: in the exterior position adjoining Judah are consequently the priests, a sacrosanct contiguity, "for it is evident (lit. 'clear beforehand') that our Lord sprang out of Judah" (Heb. 7: 14). A sincere approach should allow that the sanctuary is separated from the city by the Levites' portion, and also, from the symmetry of the plan, by half the priests' portion—i.e., by 15,000 units of measurement.

This unit must now be examined. Two units are introduced in 40: 5ff.—the "cubit and a handbreadth" or great cubit of 21 to 22 inches, and the reed of six great cubits. Throughout the long series of temple-measurements, mostly in cubits, the unit, except in 42: 3, is stated each time prior to the final look at the surrounding wall, "500" square (42: 20). When therefore we reach unitless land-measurements (45: 1-6 E.VV., not R.S.V.), including this "500", the implication is that the reed has come into its own: otherwise it is superfluous, used only for distances of six cubits, yet six times not for those. In addition, supplying "cubits" for the oblation makes nonsense of a land-plan which, extending at least to Jordan and Dead Sea, equates a tribal portion's east-west length with the oblation (48: 8): 25,000 cubits is eight to nine miles, 25,000 reeds about 50 miles, the average width of Palestine. Thirdly, propensity against finding the plan practicable, latent in both critical and allegorical approaches, conduces to a too facile rejection, based on the implausible Greek rendering, of the Hebrew

¹⁵ "The temple occupies the centre of the land" (Cooke, *I.C.C.*, p. 403); so Lofthouse, *Century Bible*, pp. 329, 341, and *Prophet of Reconstruction*, pp. 209f.

of 42: 16-19 where the wall measurement, the unitless "500" of v. 20 and 45: 2, is in reeds. Such separate mile-square surrounding wall or "frame of a city" (40: 2) is indispensable to ensure the temple's sanctity and to account for the prophet's movements: merged into the temple-complex of 500 cubits square¹⁶ it would, owing to the elevation of the courts, be far below the level of the central arcana,¹⁷ an inadequate and indeed pointless accretion for its express purpose, "to make a separation between the holy and the common" (42: 20), while at Ezekiel's entrance (40: 3-6) and exit (47: 2 A.V.) distinction between outside gate and outer-court gate is there for the candid eye.

Orthodox study cannot therefore simply follow the critical school in assuming "cubits" and writing off the land-plan as a baseless fabric: "reeds" must be given every chance. The city which is "the joy of the whole earth" is then some 10 miles square, large enough to include that other "city of David", Bethlehem; and the temple is about 30 miles north, at the heart of Palestine, in the Shechem or Samaritan district, home of the aliens set as keepers of the charge (44: 7f.), surrounded by graves of upstart Northern kings which were a recognizable defilement (43: 7-9) such as those of David's line could not have been (cf. Acts 2: 29f.). We thus get a potential sanctuary site which obliges study of its relation to the order of Melchizedek. Of the latter it is still true that there is much to say which is hard to explain, but the authority of Hebrews is surely enough to rule out closed ears. Whence the Epistle's interest in Ps. 110? Our Lord cited it in argument with Pharisees and at his trial, but only after the Resurrection could the tremendous implication of "Sit thou at my right hand" have been unfolded to the disciples. New Testament emphasis on the right-hand session is therefore traceable to the teaching of the risen Jesus, and it is reasonable to think that the Epistle's line on Melchizedek is likewise derived from "them that heard him" (2: 3) on Easter Day and the following days.

¹⁶ Actually inclusion of the reed-thick wall makes the temple-complex, and therefore the wall, 501 cubits E.-W., an awkward point which commentators burke by concentrating on the N.-S. total of 500. R.V. and American-Jewish trans. in *Soncino Books* have "reeds" in 42: 16-19; 45: 1; 48: 8f., 30-35: cf. Vulgate, 42: 16-19; 48: 8; A.V., *ib.* plus 45: 1; LXX, trans. Sir L. Brenton, 45: 1f.; 48: 8.

¹⁷ The inner court rises 15 steps (40: 22, 31), equated (cf. Lofthouse, *Century Bible*, p. 297) to 9 cubits, while the platform of the house is 6 cubits higher (41: 8), or 15 cubits above ground-level: the screening wall is 6 cubits high (40: 5). Even LXX in 42: 20 distinguishes wall from sanctuary. For further discussion see *Expository Times*, Aug., 1944, pp. 292 ff.

Elsewhere the present writer has proffered evidence sacred and profane to show Melchizedek a priest of resurrection-faith;¹⁸ but this article will confine itself to "the first principles of the oracles of God." Basically he was a priest of creation-faith, of "God Most High, maker of heaven and earth" (Gen. 14: 19 R.V.m., R.S.V., LXX), and in accordance our Epistle says that the faith over which he presided (for "beyond all contradiction the less is blessed by the better," 7: 7) was *imprimis* in the formation of the universe by the word of God (11: 2f.). Ezekiel's vision is in harmony: the sanctuary stream, swelling miraculously and bringing healing wherever it goes, is "not belonging to this created world" (Heb. 9: 11, N.E.B.), but speaks of a new exercise of creative power, of dew from the womb of the morning (cf. Ps. 110: 3).

The corollary to Melchizedek's faith is indeed trust in a new creation, anticipation of reward (Heb. 11: 6, 26) in "spirits of righteous men made perfect" (12: 23)—*zedek* become *s(h)alem*. This doctrine can be attributed to him by linking the "enemies" of Gen. 14: 20 to those of Ps. 110 whom 1 Cor. 15: 25-27 takes as including "the last enemy", concatenating Pss. 8 and 110 as does Hebrews to find promise of death's destruction (1: 13; 2: 8, 14)—a meeting of minds surely redolent of the Emmaus road. Again, Melchizedek's bread and wine—since Abraham's men were living off the recovered food stores of the sacked towns (vv. 11, 24)—can deserve mention only as symbolic, as harvest of burial. Final confirmation comes from Heb. 11 where everything said of patriarchal faith must apply *a fortiori* to Abraham's spiritual superior: he believed in the realm to which immortal Enoch attained (v. 5), in a heavenly homeland (v. 16), in God's power to raise the dead (v. 19), in the recompense of the reward and creation's ultimate perfection (v. 40). So when our author speaks of faith toward God, resurrection, and judgment as part of "the word of the beginning of the Christ (or Messiah)" over which he would not delay (6: 1f.), his subsequent, and at first sight inconsistent, dilation on faith confirms resurrection and judgment as among the first principles pertaining to Melchizedek's order, patriarchal rudiments of which he doubted the recipients' appreciation (5: 12) but on awareness of which he nevertheless decided, as in 6: 18-20 and chap. 11, to build.¹⁹

¹⁸ *Church Quarterly Review*, July-Sept., 1944, pp. 175ff.

¹⁹ The other doctrines—repentance, washings, laying on of hands—are patently pre-Christian; and all six are "consistent with the creed of a Pharisaic Jew": cf. *Peake's Comm.* (1962), 883f. Christian rudiments are as in 1: 3; 2: 14; 9: 28; 12: 2. For τοῦ χριστοῦ as "of the Messiah" cf. 5: 5; 11: 26.

So in his own right Melchizedek stands—even presides (7: 9)—in the Law as priest of abiding life, the negative Mosaic witness (v. 3) being merely confirmatory; and the crux of our investigation is whether his faith is discernible in Ezek. 40-48. This is at least not inconceivable, for the vision is the crowning message from both the seer of the revived bones (37: 1-14) and the encomiast of the primeval “king” of Tyre (28: 12-15), viewpoints uniting in the temple-emblem of date-palm or *phoenix*, a symbol of new life whose introduction into Solomon’s temple points to Hiram rather than Moses.²⁰ A like union of Canaan with new life is pictured in the Dead Sea’s resuscitation, associable with Melchizedek in that the expedition blessed by him embodied renaissance for the Dead Sea cities. Nevertheless in the vision death reigns among priests, princes, and people: the nation is reborn, but what of the righteous individual who “shall surely live, he shall not die” (18: 28)? Has the prophet forgotten this mystic assurance? If we now ask concentration on a hint that he has not, it is with some confidence that here, as in other facets of this study, we follow our New Testament authority on Melchizedek.

In his discussion of the greater and more perfect tabernacle, associable with the tabernacle of David and so with the oblation, he fastens on the abrogation of Atonement-day (Heb. 9: 7f., 12, 25), but alongside its “blood of goats and bulls” sets an extraneous rite, “ashes of a heifer sprinkling the unclean” (v. 13), the “water for impurity” which cleanses from corpse-contact in Num. 19, called by Septuagint “water of sprinkling”. This divagation towards the most severe taboo in Judaism,²¹ revulsion from the contamination of death, appears intensely purposeful as related to its conquest (2: 14), and in fact our author immediately draws metaphors from the rite—“without spot . . . cleanse from dead works”—returns to it in 10: 22 in the figures of sprinkling and clean water likewise used in Ezek. 36: 25, and clinches that parallel

²⁰ *C.Q.R.*, July-Sept., 1938, pp. 187 ff. LXX φοῖνῖξ bot. *phoenix dactylifera*. Ezekiel’s abhorrence of “women weeping for Tammuz” (8: 14) is sometimes taken to condemn *in toto* the cult of the dying-rising god; but the gravamen was the rite’s observance by Jehovah’s people in Jehovah’s precincts. Attitude more in consonance with Ezek. 28: 12-15 may be induced by linking the third days of first and new creations: see *C.Q.R.*, July-Sept., 1963, pp. 292ff., and cf. “The Phoenix Land”, *Congregational Quarterly*, April, 1949.

²¹ “No sect of Judaism, no unorthodox school, however schismatic it might be, has ever set itself free from this taboo” (Del Medico, *Riddle of Scrolls*, p. 83). A Samaritan priest must not attend a death-bed (Thomson, *Samaritans*, p. 139); cf. Lev. 21: 11, of the high priest.

with the blood of Jesus by terming the latter "blood of sprinkling" (12: 24). The corresponding lustration for Ezekiel's priests after attending relatives' death-beds thus claims attention, and may be judged to have already secured it in the Epistle's circle. To the Law's rite 44: 26-29 adds a sin-offering (LXX "propitiation") pronounced a priestly inheritance identified with the Lord God. Such offering could not have been eaten by the Law's priests, since it bore their corporate defilement, but had to be dealt with as in Heb. 13: 11—blood brought into holy place by high priest, carcase burned outside camp (Lev. 4: 1-12). But in the sanctuary of peace it is included in the inheritance, i.e., offerings which could be eaten (Num. 18: 8-24; Deut. 18: 1f.), there is no facility for bringing in blood, and the rubric proceeds, "These²² shall eat . . . the sin-offering." A legitimate conclusion is that "We have an altar whereof they have no right to eat" (Heb. 13: 10), that "He is the propitiation" (1 John 2: 2), having offered himself, not in the sanctuary, but outside the camp to sanctify the people (Heb. 13: 12f.), to offset the taint of mortality among his citizens.

This mating of Ezekiel's thought with the Epistle's gives encouragement to see the true tabernacle's structure in the oblation where, in opposition to the first tabernacle around which the people formed the holy camp (Deut. 23: 14), the "common" city is outside the holy territory and in its name, "The LORD is there," aspires towards "Christ Jesus whom God set forth a mercy-seat" (Rom. 3: 25). It would indeed be a blow to the latent-patent understanding of the Testaments if the New treated as outside its concern the command to "show the house to the house of Israel, that they may be ashamed" (43: 10). But on the contrary our reconnaissance suggests that the Testaments' nomenclature could come from the vision—that hence we have "The New Covenant commonly called The New Testament" (R.S.V. title). The injunction that the propitiation²³ "shall be to them for an inheritance: I am their inheritance" is formally ὅπου διαθήκη, "where there is a testament" (Heb. 9: 16, N.E.B.), so that if the writer of Hebrews had the death-lustration, old and new, much in mind he could in dealing with "the promised eternal inheritance" (v. 15, R.S.V.) pass easily from the covenant-sense of *diathēkē* to the testament-sense where the "death of the contractor must be established" (v. 16), and so

²² Emphatic in Hebrew and Greek. "They, even they" in American-Jewish trans.

²³ "It shall be": so LXX, Peshitta, A.V., and American-Jewish trans. Cooke, p. 487 allows that "sin-offering" is the only grammatical antecedent for "it".

to the conclusion that the Law's representation of Jehovah as the Levites' inheritance²⁴ carries like implication: "hence even the first covenant was not ratified without blood" (v. 18, R.S.V.).

The stage is now reached where it may be ventured that the oblation displays "the city which hath the foundations" in the sense of Cowper's hymn:

Jehovah founded it in blood,
The blood of his incarnate Son. . . .
Her name is call'd The LORD is there,
And who has power to drive him thence?²⁵

May one not then urge study of city and setting in the words of the metrical psalm (48: 13f.):

Mark her bulwarks well,
That ye may tell posterity.
For this God doth abide
Our God for evermore; He will
Ev'n unto death us guide?

Could not seer and psalmist share hope of a metropolis with Mount Zion "on the sides of the north" (v. 2 E.V.V.) and at its heart the home-town of the King (Mic. 5: 2), of a Lion of Judah with lair in Zion, covert in Salem,²⁶ of a house "at the head of the mountains" (Is. 2: 2 R.V.m.), of a Jerusalem, "foundation of peace," with the place of its tabernacle enlarged to embrace Salem,²⁷ of "victory by thy right hand" assured since

God has promised in his sanctuary:

With exultation I will divide up Shechem (Pss. 60: 6; 108: 7, R.S.V.)? The patriarchs looked for the city—and went to Shechem. Moses, seeing the invisible King, sent the tribes to the head of the mountain-land. Only with David do we come to Zion; and if afterwards Shechem fades into Samaritan mists, yet it fills the eye again when he came "whose right it is" (Ezek. 21: 26f.), when David's Son sat at Jacob's Well.

Its Samaritan liaison makes Shechem unique both as the sole sanctuary where sacrifice to Israel's God has persisted into our time and as providing the one pinpointed pulpit of Jesus. From this *ex cathedra* seat of pre-Mosaic purveyance "another priest" announced his Messiahship, concealed from Jews, to an "other-race" woman²⁸ of dubious character and uninformed cult, then spoke of "others" who had tilled and sown, whose harvest his followers

²⁴ Num. 18: 20; Deut. 10: 9; 18: 2; Josh. 13: 33.

²⁵ Heb. 11: 10, R.V. *Olney Hymns*, 14, "Jehovah-shammah".

²⁶ Ps. 76: 2 R.V.m. Cf. Gen. 49: 9f.; Ezek. 19: 1-9; Rev. 5: 5.

²⁷ Is. 54: 2; Ezek. 16: 46, 61; *E.Q.*, *l.c.*, p. 22.

²⁸ ἑτεροῦς ἕτερος, Heb. 7: 15; ἀλλογενής, Luke 17: 18, as Ezek. 44: 7 LXX.

would reap. Where the covenant-angel, "the Lord" (Ezek. 44: 2, 5), had revealed water bringing life from the sanctuary, "the Lord" (John 4: 1) promised "water springing up into everlasting life." There the recognized "Saviour of the world" spent two days "in his own country" (vv. 42ff.); and the Evangelist's subtlety in conveying deeper significance²⁹ may well relate "the two days" to those of Hos. 6: 2 as auguring the day of resurrection. What we have here is our high priest choosing the patriarchal and prophetic—the pre- and post-Mosaic—sanctuary to proclaim himself to outsiders, and fitting his mission into the framework of abiding life and world-salvation, i.e., of the order of Melchizedek and the tabernacle of David (Acts 15: 17).

Whether the "hour" is endless wherein he shall be unhonoured there is outside the terms of this preamble, and indeed, insofar as the Shekinah is involved, outside the decision of theologians. Meanwhile we may see darkly in the mirror of Ezekiel's directions "the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen," and find there, not a first attempt to codify praxis against the Return, but the goal towards which the existent Law vainly strove, not a step in centralizing the cultus at Moriah, but awareness of an older, wider, and more abiding worship, not an apotheosis of Judaism, but a context in which "the Epistle to the Hebrews and other sections of the N.T., in turn, are to be understood"³⁰—and not, one trusts, a root of bitterness, but invitation to lengthen the cords and strengthen the stakes of our understanding of the Testamental unity.

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²⁹ Cf. R. H. Lightfoot, *St. John's Gospel* (Oxford Paperbacks), pp. 234, 349, "religious implications which only gradually become apparent".

³⁰ Muilenburg, *Peake's Comm.* (1962), 515a, on Ezek. 40-48. The section's relevance to study of the Qumran Community is also becoming apparent: see Black, *Scrolls and Christian Origins*. Altogether it has to be realized that the interest of first-century ex-Jews in Ezek. 40-48 could have been comparable to ours in the Apocalypse.