

EZEKIEL'S RHETORIC: ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN BUILDING PROTOCOL AND SHAME AND HONOR AS THE KEYS IN IDENTIFYING THE BUILDER OF THE ESCHATOLOGICAL TEMPLE

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I. INTRODUCTION

Ezekiel's Babylonian/ANE context has aided Ezekiel scholars in posing plausible solutions for many of the idiosyncrasies, both textual and cultural, found within the book that bears his name.¹ This context also helps to prove that Ezekiel intended to teach that YHWH will be the builder of the visionary temple, but not for reasons once considered so obvious. It is rooted in the prophet's rhetorical strategy whereby Mesopotamian motifs are used in the process of indicting the nation for covenant violations and temple defilement. This strategy is further anchored to his use of shame/honor principles tied to ANE temple-construction protocol. In this article I propose that Ezekiel omits the key *human* elements from ANE temple-building practices in his temple vision of 40:1–43:11 in an effort to shame Israel into realizing how their sin had not only defiled the Solomonic temple beyond salvaging but had also dishonored YHWH before the nations. In particular, Ezekiel's reflection on these issues sheds light on the enigmatic passage of 43:10–11 where

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¹ To list just a few: Othmar Keel, *Jahwe-Visionen und Siegelkunst: Eine neue Deutung der Majestätsschilderungen in Jes 6, Ez 1 und 10 und Sach 4* (Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1977); John F. Kutsko, *Between Heaven and Earth: Divine Presence and Absence in the Book of Ezekiel* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2000); Daniel Bodi, *The Book of Ezekiel and the Poem of Erra* (Freiburg: Universitätsverlag/ Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1991); Daniel Block, "Divine Abandonment: Ezekiel's Adaptation of an Ancient Near Eastern Motif," in *The Book of Ezekiel: Theological and Anthropological Perspectives* (ed. Margaret S. Odell and John T. Strong; SBLSymS 9; Atlanta: SBL, 2000) 15–42; Michael Astour, "Ezekiel's Prophecy of Gog and the Cuthean Legend of Naram-Sin," *JBL* 95 (1976) 567–79; Moshé Anbar, "Une nouvelle allusion à une tradition babylonienne dans Ézéchiél (XXII 24)," *VT* 29 (1979) 352–53; P. Dhorme and L. H. Vincent, "Les chérubins," *RB* 35 (1926) 328–58; Harold H. P. Dressler, "The Identification of the Ugaritic Dnīl with the Daniel of Ezekiel," *VT* 29 (1979) 152–61; S. P. Garfinkel, "Studies in Akkadian Influences in the Book of Ezekiel" (PhD diss., Columbia University, 1983); André Lemaire, "Les formules des datation dans Ézéchiél à la lumière de données épigraphiques récentes," in *Ezekiel and His Book* (ed. J. Lust; Belgium: Leuven University Press, 1986) 359–66; B. Maarsingh, "Das Schwertlied in Ez 21,13–22 und das Erra-Gedicht," in *Ezekiel and His Book* (ed. J. Lust; Belgium: Leuven University Press, 1986) 350–58; René Dussaud, "Les Visions d'Ézéchiél," *RHR* 37 (1898) 308; Alfred Jeremias, *Das Alte Testament im Lichte des Alten Orients* (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs Buchhandlung, 1906) 580–85; and B. Meissner, "Bemerkungen zu den Asarhaddoninschriften," *OLZ* 14 (1911) cols. 474–77, esp. cols. 476–77.

YHWH, through his prophet, tells the people to “measure” (מדד) the temple “proportion” (תכנית) in order that they might be ashamed (כלם) for all their sin.²

I will order my discussion into five parts: (1) I will briefly look at the options proposed for the builder of Ezekiel’s temple; (2) I will situate my discussion within the context of ANE shame/honor concepts; (3) I will examine biblical and ANE temple-building practices and how they compare/contrast with those presented in Ezekiel; (4) I will compare Ezekiel’s and Solomon’s temples to show how they differ in light of ANE temple-building regimens; and (5) I will assess how Ezekiel 43:10–11 makes the most sense rhetorically in light of my discussions in sections 2–4. I will conclude that it is the combining of these facets that helps elucidate Ezekiel’s rhetorical strategy in the temple vision.

II. POSSIBLE BUILDERS OF EZEKIEL’S TEMPLE

Who is the builder of Ezekiel’s visionary temple? Three options generally dominate the debate: (1) the post-exilic community;³ (2) the Jewish people of the future;⁴ or (3) YHWH himself.⁵ Others eliminate the question altogether by positing that Ezekiel’s visionary temple is either a metaphor for Israel’s restoration⁶ or an ideal temple,⁷ which was never intended to be constructed.⁸ While many debata-

² Margaret Odell has also pointed out the possibilities of Ezekiel’s use of ANE motifs when fashioning the temple vision, in particular Esarhaddon’s rebuilding of Marduk’s temple in Babylon (*Ezekiel* [Smyth & Helwys Bible Commentary; Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys, 2005] 483–84).

³ Contra Ellen Davis who suggests that Ezekiel’s audience was to “participate in the vision’s fulfillment” (*Swallowing the Scroll* [JSOTSup 78; Sheffield: Almond, 1989] 124). Note also that G. A. Cooke implies that the temple was to be “translated into fact” perhaps later during the postexilic period (*The Book of Ezekiel* [Edinburgh: T & T Clark, repr. 1960] 431). Also, Kurt Möhlenbrink draws a connection between Zerubbabel’s temple and that described by Ezekiel (*Der Tempel Salamos; eine Untersuchung seiner Stellung in der Sakralarchitektur des alten Orients* [BWANT 4; Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1932] 31)—as noted by Walther Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 25–48* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983) 360 (hereafter Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 2*). There also appears to be evidence that the Qumran community studied Ezekiel’s temple description. Cf. Yigael Yadin, *The Temple Scroll* (New York: Random House, 1985) 167–69; J. Maier, *The Temple Scroll* [JSOTSup 34; Sheffield: JSOT, 1985] 58–65, 90–101, and idem, “Die Hofanlagen in Tempel-Entwurf des Ezechiel im Licht der ‘Tempelrolle’ von Qumran,” in *Prophecy: Essays Presented to Georg Fohrer on his Sixty-fifth Birthday, 6 September 1980* (ed. J. A. Emerton; BZAW 150; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1980) 55–67.

⁴ E.g. John W. Schmitt and J. Carl Laney, *Messiah’s Coming Temple: Ezekiel’s Prophetic Vision of the Future Temple* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1997) or Paul M. Joyce, *Ezekiel* (New York: T&T Clark, 2009) 229. Joyce does not specify when or who will build the temple, but does point out that the prophet assumes that the future restored temple is to be based upon his plan.

⁵ Robert W. Jensen, *Ezekiel* (Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2009) 303; Steven Tuell, *Ezekiel* (NIBC 15; Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2009) 295; Walther Eichrodt, *Ezekiel* (trans. Cosslett Quin; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1970) 542; Jon Levenson, *Theology of the Program of Restoration of Ezekiel 40–48* (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1976) 17; Kalinda Rose Stevenson, *The Vision of Transformation: The Territorial Rhetoric of Ezekiel 40–48* (SBLDS 154; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996) 165; and Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 2* 328. The idea that YHWH would be the builder of a new eschatological temple finds support in 1 Enoch 90:29; *Jub.* 1:17, 27–29; and 11Q Temple 29:8–10. See further comments by Yadin, *Temple Scroll* 113–15.

⁶ Daniel I. Block, *Ezekiel 25–48* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998) 505–6 (hereafter Block, *Ezekiel 2*). Block goes on to note the theological implications of the vision that resonate with Paul’s “spiritualization of the temple” whereby believers become the “living temple of God” (1 Cor 3:16–17; 6:19). He correctly points out that there is no command to build in Ezekiel’s account (p. 510).

⁷ E.g. Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Ezekiel* (Interpretation; Louisville, KY: John Knox, 1990) 197–98.

ble issues do arise from Ezekiel's closing chapters (i.e. 40–48), the discussion concerning the builder of Ezekiel's temple rarely gets more than a few passing comments.⁹ Whenever scholars do note that only YHWH could be responsible, no further explanations are given. Now while some may argue that it is “obvious” that only YHWH could be the intended builder (whether the temple is real or idyllic is another matter altogether), we will see that there is a more significant reason for this conclusion than simply an assumption based upon the supposed tenor of the text.¹⁰

Moreover, scholars fail to ask the simple question: Why does Ezekiel not mention explicitly the builder of the temple amidst the minutiae of the temple plan? This seems odd in light of the specific arrangements for employing artisans in the building of the original tabernacle and temple (see more on this below). This lacuna is also observed by Walther Zimmerli when he notes, “No human laborer's hand is shown, no human king's pomp (by contrast with 1 Kings and Chronicles) was involved.”¹¹ This absence of human involvement betrays a heavenly builder, YHWH, and is best explained through shame/honor concepts.

⁸ See the work of Stevenson, *Vision of Transformation: The Territorial Rhetoric of Ezekiel 40–48*. Stevenson (p. 165) concludes that the closing chapters serve the rhetorical function of restructuring “the society from preexilic monarchy to a postexilic temple society without a human king.” She goes on to postulate that the idea of a “blueprint” genre here in 40–48 is misguided. Stevenson argues that Ezekiel's vision was primarily for the purpose of defining “spaces” or gradations of separation of the holy from the profane, not to give a literal blueprint for the temple. Therefore the problematic absence of “vertical” measurements in this picture of the temple would be solved (4–5, 19–36, 116). Similarly, Jenson avers that the temple has purely theological implications (*Ezekiel* 299–304). See however my comments below.

⁹ Many see the lack of the recognition formula (i.e. “then you/they will know that I am YHWH”), the appearance of the term מַלְאָךְ (43:9), the competing roles of the Zadokites and Levites, and the “Law of the Temple,” along with other aspects, as evidence that multiple layers and authorship are in play. For a brief list of the differences between Ezekiel's law and the Mosaic Law see, Blenkinsopp, *Ezekiel* 195. Moreover, while most Ezekielian scholars agree that chapters 40–42 come from the hand of the prophet himself (e.g. Cooke, *Ezekiel* 426; and more recently, Tuell, *Ezekiel* 283 and idem, *The Law of the Temple in Ezekiel 40–48* [HSM 49; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992] 35–37), rarely do scholars ask the obvious questions of who built the temple or why Ezekiel does not mention this fact.

¹⁰ Some may assume that because Ezekiel 40–48 describes a temple with a river flowing from under its threshold (47:1) along with the Edenesque landscape (47:6–12) that “of course” only YHWH could have built the temple. However, this type of “knee-jerk” conclusion lacks an appreciation of Ezekiel's clear rhetorical purposes throughout his work. Time and again Ezekiel uses or manipulates ANE paradigms, themes, and motifs, both subtly and blatantly, for the purposes of teaching a greater truth. However, Zimmerli correctly notes that, “At the sight of the temple painted for them by the prophet, the temple which is promised to his people by Yahweh, their eyes will be opened to the extent to which they had gone astray in their earlier dealings with the sacred which had also found expression not least in the ground plan of the old temple” (*Ezekiel* 2 419). My proposal seeks to flesh out what Zimmerli and others have hinted at but have failed to grasp completely.

¹¹ Zimmerli, *Ezekiel* 2 361.

III. SHAME AND HONOR IN EZEKIEL

Recent social-scientific studies related to the Bible have aided scholars in understanding a number of enigmatic texts.¹² Of particular importance to this study is the role of shame and honor in ancient societies. Lyn Bechtel comments, “The emotional response of shame relates to the anxiety aroused by ‘inadequacy’ or ‘failure’ to live up to *internalized, societal and parental goals and ideals*.”¹³ For the ancients, shame¹⁴ and honor were perceived of as being in finite quantities—thus as one was shamed another received honor.¹⁵ In tight-knit social communities honor is shared by all as is dishonor/shame when conduct unbefitting the social group is exposed or the social group does not live up to expected ideals especially in a patron-client arrangement.¹⁶ Furthermore, in Mediterranean cultures honor and shame play an

¹² As of the late 1990s, very few works focusing on honor and shame in the prophetic texts had been undertaken. Cf. Johanna Stiebert, “Shame and Prophecy: Approaches Past and Present,” *BibInt* 8 (2000) 262; and Ronald Simkins, “Return to Yahweh?: Honor and Shame in Joel,” *Semeia* 68: *Honor and Shame in the World of the Bible* (ed. V. H. Matthews and D. C. Benjamin; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996) 41–54. However, in recent years this area of study has seen increased interest especially in the book of Ezekiel. E.g. Eric Ortland, “Shame in Restoration in Ezekiel,” *Scandinavian Evangelical E-Journal for New Testament Studies* 2 (2011) 1–17; Jacqueline Lapsley, *Can These Bones Live? The Problem of Moral Self in the Book of Ezekiel* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2000); idem, “Shame and Self-Knowledge: The Positive Role of Shame in Ezekiel’s View of the Moral Self,” in *The Book of Ezekiel: Theological and Anthropological Perspectives* (SBLSymS 9; Atlanta: SBL, 2000) 143–73; and Margret Odell, “The Inversion of Shame and Forgiveness in Ezekiel 16.59–63,” *JTOT* 56 (1992) 101–12. Other studies on shame and honor in the OT include Lyn Bechtel, “Shame as a Sanction of Social Control in Biblical Israel: Judicial, Political, and Social Shaming,” *JTOT* 49 (1991) 47–76; Victor Matthews and Don Benjamin, eds., *Semeia* 68; J. Pedersen, “Honour and Shame,” in *Israel: Its Life and Culture* (London: Oxford University Press, 1962) 2:213–44; and Saul M. Olyan, “Honor, Shame, and Covenant Relations in Ancient Israel and Its Environment,” *JBL* 115 (1996) 201–18. For a fuller listing of articles and monographs dealing with shame in the Bible, see Lapsley, “Shame and Self-Knowledge” 146, n. 7.

¹³ Bechtel, “Shame as a Sanction” 49 (emphasis original). Bechtel’s definition relies on G. Piers and M. Singer, *Shame and Guilt* (New York: W. Norton, 1953). In the case of Ezekiel we could substitute YHWH for the “parental” part of the definition. Lapsley notes both individual (usually private) and corporate (always public) shaming (“Shame and Self-Knowledge” 146). Lapsley’s (ibid.) understanding that shaming is “a form of social sanction,” is the definition I am adopting here. Interestingly, Lapsley (p. 148) focuses on the personal level of shame in Ezekiel as opposed to the corporate aspect (she does point out that the latter is present, p. 151) while failing to even deal with its appearance in chapter 43.

¹⁴ See Stiebert for a detailed definition of shame and a bibliography focusing on the topic (“Shame and Prophecy” 256–57, 272–75). Stiebert (p. 257) correctly points up that in the ancient world shame is not always associated with transgression but can rather have a direct connection to status in a community (e.g. widowhood or barrenness). Moreover, Bechtel notes the difference between shame and guilt in ancient cultures (“Shame as a Sanction” 47–48). In Ezekiel 43 shame must be understood in light of former transgressions, especially in relation to the Solomonic temple noted in Ezekiel 8 and spiritual harlotry in chapters 16 and 23. See further, Odell, “Inversion of Shame” 101–12; Olyan, “Honor, Shame” 201–18; Ortland, “Shame in Restoration in Ezekiel” 2, nn. 4 and 5.

¹⁵ Cf., e.g., the work of Philip Esler, *Sex, Wives, and Warriors: Reading Biblical Narrative with Its Ancient Audience* (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2011) 58–61, 64–68; Simkins, “Return to Yahweh” 50; Bechtel, “Shame as a Sanction” 64–65; and Stiebert, “Shame and Prophecy” 260. For parallels of this concept in ANE suzerain-vassal treaties, see Olyan, “Honor, Shame” 297. See further studies by M. A. Klopfenstein, *Scham und Schande nach dem Alten Testament* (ATANT 62; Zürich: Theologischer Verlag, 1972); and the social-scientific bibliography in Stiebert (p. 259), which parallels much of Esler’s oft-noted works.

¹⁶ Esler, *Sex, Wives, and Warriors* 59, 68; Stiebert, “Shame and Prophecy” 257; Ortland, “Shame in Restoration in Ezekiel” 2. Bechtel points out that shame is most effective in group-oriented societies

important role in the lives of men especially when maintaining the chastity of their women. When women behave in a dishonourable way, the men of the family are shamed.¹⁷

It is therefore no surprise why YHWH was shamed in the presence of the nations by the actions of his unfaithful “spouse,” Israel (cf. Ezekiel 8; 16; and 23).¹⁸ Of course the “unfaithful spouse” motif must be understood in the context of covenant. In this vein, Saul Oylan notes the symbiotic relationship between covenant, honor, and shame in the HB and the ANE.¹⁹ YHWH had attempted to share a portion of his honor with Israel (cf. 1 Sam 2:30); however, in spurning YHWH Israel had brought shame upon their overlord, their metaphorical husband.²⁰ Moreover, YHWH’s “spouse” had defiled his temple beyond repair thus further shaming him before the nations. However, in Ezekiel’s temple this shaming is reversed as Israel takes on a lesser position in relation to its construction. One way Ezekiel promotes this shaming motif is by eliminating the human elements/steps involved in ANE temple-building protocol.

IV. ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN TEMPLE-BUILDING PROTOCOL

Throughout the ANE temple-building protocol was somewhat uniform.²¹ It is very likely that segments of the exilic population would have taken part in Neo-Babylonian building projects as forced labor (cf. 2 Kgs 24:14, 16; Jer 24:1; 29:2; 52:15) including the construction/reconstruction of temples.²² Interestingly, the Israelite settlement at Tel-Abib in Babylon, of which Ezekiel was a part, was near Nippur, the religious hub of ancient Babylon.²³ The Babylonian Talmud records

whereas guilt dominates individual-based societies like those found in Western cultures (“Shame as a Sanction” 52). For a discussion on the difference between shame and guilt, see Bechtel, “Shame as a Sanction” 51.

¹⁷ Esler, *Sex, Wives, and Warriors* 60; Stiebert, “Shame and Prophecy” 260; Julian Pitt-Rivers, *The Fate of Shechem or the Politics of Sex* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977) 161–70.

¹⁸ On these chapters note in particular the work of Julie Galambush, *Jerusalem in the Book of Ezekiel: The City as Yahweh’s Wife* (SBLDS 130; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992). For a critique of Galambush’s perspective and an alternate view of Ezekiel 16, see Stiebert, “Shame and Prophecy” 265–66, 267–71 respectively. Lapsley suggests, I believe incorrectly, that in chapters 16 and 23 “shame may well be construed as a positive value that confers honor, not dishonor” (“Shame and Self-Knowledge” 150). For her treatment of chapters 16 and 23, see Lapsley, (“Shame and Self-Knowledge” 160–71.

¹⁹ Oylan, “Honor, Shame,” esp. 704–18. Cf. Daniel Bodi and his connecting of honor (כבוד) and shame (לְבוֹשׁ) in covenant relationships at El-Amarna (*The Michal Affair: From Zimri-Lim to the Rabbis* [Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix, 2005]). As noted by Ortland, “Shame in Restoration in Ezekiel” 3.

²⁰ Cf. Oylan, “Honor, Shame” 205.

²¹ We do know that Egyptian temple building eliminated certain steps in the process (e.g. divine permission to build) due to the status of the pharaoh as god-incarnate. Cf. Henri Frankfort, *Kingship and the Gods* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969) 269.

²² Douglas A. Knight and Amy-Jill Levine, *The Meaning of the Bible: What the Jewish Scriptures and Christian Old Testament Can Teach Us* (New York: Harper Collins, 2011) 33.

²³ Cf. Henry O. Thompson, “Chebar,” *ABD* 1:893. See further comments by Odell, *Ezekiel*, 13, 59; Tuell, *Ezekiel*, 9; Joyce, *Ezekiel*, 66; Knight and Levine, *Meaning of the Bible* 34, 36. For texts revealing the religious significance of the site, see P. W. Gaebelcin, “Nippur,” *ISBE* 3:541–43; Judith A. Franke, “Nippur,” *ABD* 4:1119–22; Jerrold S. Cooper, *The Return of Ninurta to Nippur* (AnOr 52; Rome: Pontificium Institutum Biblicum, 1978); Bertil Albrektson, *History and the Gods* (Sweden: Gleerup, 1967) 101; S.

that several Jewish communities actually lived at Nippur and in the city of Babylon.²⁴ Nevertheless, even if the exiles did not participate in Babylonian temple construction, textually, they would have known about the construction procedures of the tabernacle and Solomon's temple, which both betray many of the key steps in ANE temple building. Therefore, Ezekiel's rhetorical use of this common ANE motif makes sense culturally.

The temple-construction process involved as many as seven steps:

- (1) The god(s) giving rest from one's enemies
- (2) Command to build or rebuild a temple
- (3) Description/plan of the temple
- (4) Gathering materials and laborers
- (5) Excavation of an existing foundation or the laying of a totally new one
- (6) The actual construction of the temple and a detailed description of the finished structure
- (7) Dedication of the temple with accompanying feasts, rituals, and blessings²⁵

I will examine these steps in light of biblical and ANE evidence and compare and contrast them with Ezekiel's vision. Through this process I will show that Ezekiel strategically omits steps specifically connected to human initiatives, especially from a king. Through this process Ezekiel not only shames his audience but also builds continuity with a key aspect of his rhetorical argument—YHWH is Israel's true king whom the people had profaned before the nations (cf. Ezekiel 1–3; 8–10; 17; 34–39).²⁶ Moreover, due to the nation's incessant idolatry Solomon's temple had been defiled beyond salvaging. Therefore, the new temple surveyed by Ezekiel would have no earthly connections to it; YHWH will be both its builder and occupier of its precincts.²⁷

Admittedly, one could argue that if Ezekiel's vision is only a plan (תכנית), which was never intended to be any more than a hypothetical teaching point, then

N. Kramer, "Lamentation over the Destruction of Nippur: A Preliminary Report," *Erlsr* 9 (1969) 89–93; "Lamentation over the Destruction of Ur" (trans. S. N. Kramer; *ANET* 455); idem, *Lamentation over the Destruction of Sumer and Ur* (AS 12; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1940) 17–21.

²⁴ Franke, "Nippur," *ABD* 4:1121.

²⁵ I have given the generally accepted list here. This list varies depending on a given scholar. See for example the work of Victor Hurowitz, *I Have Built You an Exalted House: Temple Building in the Bible in Light of Mesopotamian and Northwest Semitic Writings* (JSOTSup 115; Sheffield: JSOT, 1992); Richard S. Ellis, *Foundation Deposits in Ancient Mesopotamia* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968) 6–34; Arvid S. Kapelrud, "Temple Building, a Task for Gods and Kings," *Or* 32 (1963) 62. See also Mark J. Boda's comparison of Hurowitz and Ellis's presentations in "From Dystopia to Myopia: Utopian re(visions) in Haggai and Zechariah 1–8," in *Utopia and Dystopia in Prophetic Texts* (ed. Ehud Ben Zvi and Michael Floyd; Publications of the Finnish Exegetical Society; Helsinki/Winona Lake, IN: Finnish Exegetical Society/University of Helsinki/Eisenbrauns, 2006) 217.

²⁶ So, too, Stevenson, *Vision of Transformation* 164. See also similar comments concerning the second temple during the early Achaemenid period by Bedford, *Temple Restoration* 237–38.

²⁷ Contra Simon Bennett who posits that the text may be implying that Israel is to rebuild the temple ("Ezekiel's Geometric Vision of the Restored Temple: From the Rod of His Wrath to the Reed of His Measuring," *HTR* 102 [2009] 431).

the rest of the temple construction steps need not apply.²⁸ However, in light of Ezekiel's overall rhetorical argument focusing on temple abandonment (chaps. 8–11), judgment (chaps. 13–24), restoration (chaps. 25–39), and temple reconstruction (chaps. 40–42), it appears that Ezekiel is intending to teach the people about future realities whether idealized or not.²⁹ After all, the very purpose of Ezekiel's final vision was to offer hope to a nation in despair—hope that included instructions on how never to end up in the same predicament again. Finally, even if Ezekiel's temple may appear idealized, based upon other prophetic texts, a renewed temple was nonetheless looked forward to in some form.³⁰

1. *Rest from enemies and the proper time to build.* This first step in ANE temple construction involves a king being at peace with his enemies. Rarely would a king begin a construction project as involved as a temple during wartime.³¹ A period of relative peace and stability was needed in order to foster construction projects both fiscally and practically (i.e. labor force). In the biblical text this motif of peace and security is common to the accounts of the tabernacle construction (Exod 14:13–31), Solomon's temple (cf. 2 Sam 7:1; 1 Kgs 5:4; 1 Chr 22:18), and the postexilic temple

²⁸ Hanna Liss, "Describe the Temple to the House of Israel: Preliminary Remarks on the Temple Vision in the Book of Ezekiel and the Question of Fictionality in Priestly Literatures," in *Utopia and Dystopia in Prophetic Texts* 122–43. Liss argues that Ezekiel's temple is only a literary device that served as the ultimate separation of the holy and the profane (esp. pp. 141–43). As a literary device, it was used to present תורה to the people because only a fictionalized temple would be safe from defilement as had happened in the past. The literary temple replaced reality and became a "literary utopia" which could always contain the כבוד of the Lord without the fear of ever losing it again.

²⁹ In this vein, Zimmerli insists that Ezek 43:1–12 "cannot be understood without looking back at chapters 8–11 and at 1:1–3:15" (*Ezekiel* 2 412). See also Brian Peterson, *Ezekiel in Context: Ezekiel's Message Understood in Its Historical Setting and Ancient Near eastern Mythological Motifs* (PTMS 182; Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2012).

³⁰ The motif of an idealized future temple can also be found in Micah 4, Isaiah 2, Haggai 2 and Zechariah 14. See also comments concerning the Qumran community's connection to Ezekiel's temple in n. 6 above.

³¹ Esarhaddon (680–669 BC) comments that he "by the might of the gods *Aššur*, Enlil, *Bēl* (Marduk), and the son of *Bēl* (*Nabū*), the gods, his helpers, ruled over all the lands and made all rulers submissive to him; [he, Esarhaddon] (re)constructed the temple of the god *Aššur*, renovated Ekur, (re)built Esagila and Babylon, completed the sanctuaries and cult centres, (and) (re)confirmed (their) regular offerings." Cf. Grant Frame, *Rulers of Babylonia: From the Second Dynasty of Isin to the End of Assyrian Domination (1157–612 BC)* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995) 176, §11 lines 7–8 [hereafter RIMB 2]. Also his son, Ashurbanipal (c. 668 BC) notes that after the gods had given him rest and had defeated his enemies he restored Esagila in Babylon. Cf. John M. P. Smith, "Building Operations of Ashurbanipal in Babylon," in *Assyrian and Babylonian Literature* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1904) 127 [hereafter *ABLi*]. See further Smith, "An Inscription of Ashurbanipal from Abou-Habba," *ABLi* 129–30. Also, the building of temples came after the gods' victory over his/her enemies. For example, see the *Enuma Elish*, and Ea's defeat of Apsu (*ANET* 61–62, lines 70–78) and Marduk's victory over Tiamat (*ANET* 68–69, lines 50–70). In Canaanite literature (i.e. *The Baal Epic*), Baal's defeat of Mot entitled him to a temple on Mount Zaphon which the artisan god, Kothar-wa-hasis constructs for him (*ANET* 131–35). For a discussion of these texts, see Hurowitz, *Exalted House* 93–96 and 100–5 respectively; Kapelrud, "Temple Building" 56–59; and Richard Clifford, "The Temple in the Ugaritic Myth of Baal," *Symposia Celebrating the Seventy-fifth Anniversary of the Founding of the American Schools of Oriental Research (1900–1975)* (ed. Frank Moore Cross; Cambridge, MA: ASOR, 1979) 140–41.

(intimated).³² In Ezekiel, a peaceful existence in the land dominates chapters 25–39. These chapters deal specifically with the final destruction/subduing of all the enemies of Israel and YHWH. Note the repetition of the phrase, ברית שלום (“the covenant of peace”; cf. 34:25; 37:26) and the use of the term בטח (“peacefully”) to describe Israel’s existence once they returned to the land (cf. 34:28; 38:8, 11, 14; 39:26).³³ However, an earthly king is not pictured as bringing victory for the nation but rather it is YHWH who is the “king” who has won the battles of chapters 38–39 and is enthroned in peace in chapters 40–48.³⁴ Note that the “prince” (נשיא) of chapters 44–48 plays only a secondary role under YHWH’s universal kingship (cf. Ezekiel 44–46; 48).³⁵

Along with the need for peace and security to foster temple construction, it was also important to adhere to the timing of the god(s). The destruction of an existing temple was generally attributed to the wrath of the god(s) due to a nation’s past sins against its deity.³⁶ Therefore, while the granting of rest from one’s enemies was seen as a positive sign from the god(s), leaders still attempted to atone for any previous wrongs perpetrated against the god(s). Similarly, if a temple fell into disrepair rulers were just as cautious concerning the will of the gods when repairing them. In each situation, divination, omens, extispicy, and the like were used by kings to determine the will of the god(s).

³² Cyrus’s defeat of Babylon in 539 BC and his rule of Judea offered a level of stability facilitating the building process. The construction of the tabernacle in the wilderness seems to be in a class all its own due to the mobility of the shrine. One could argue that the defeat of pharaoh and the Egyptians marked Israel’s period of relative peace in the wilderness (Exod 14:27–31).

³³ So, too, Block who connects this pattern with the Baal and Marduk myths which tell of the enthronement of the god after the defeat of his enemies (*Ezekiel* 2 510).

³⁴ I am working from the canonical assumption that Ezekiel is a unity in its final form and that chapters 38–48 came from Ezekiel. Many scholars have noted the possibility of Ezekielian authorship especially for chapters 38–39. Cf. Michael C. Astour, “Ezekiel’s Prophecy of Gog and the Cuthean Legend of Naram-Sin,” *JBL* 95 (1976) 567; Zimmerli, *Ezekiel* 2 302–4; Susan Niditch, “Ezekiel 40–48 in a Visionary Context,” *CBQ* 48 (1986) 208–24; Cook, *Prophecy and Apocalypticism* 87–103; Block seems to be implying this from his conclusions in his study “Gog and the Pouring out of the Spirit: Reflections on Ezekiel xxxix 21–9,” *VT* 37 (1987) 269–70, and also Boadt, who argues forcefully for the unity of chapters 33–39 and the strong possibility of Ezekielian authorship (“The Function of the Salvation Oracles in Ezekiel 33–37,” *HAR* 12 [1990] 1–21).

³⁵ Stevenson correctly comments that the temple vision served the rhetorical function of “demot[ing] the monarchy” in particular by limiting access to the temple (*Vision of Transformation* 164).

³⁶ Peter Ross Bedford, *Temple Restoration in Early Achaemenid Judah* (JSOTSup 65; Leiden: Brill, 2001) 172–78; 270–92. Bedford (pp. 173–74) notes that the possible reason that the people had not reconstructed the second temple was due to their fear that the wrath of YHWH had not yet been assuaged (cf. Pss 74:9; 79:5; 80:5 [Heb]; Lam 5:20–22; Isa 64:8–11 [Heb]). Cf. Victor Hurowitz, “Restoring the Temple: Why and When?” *JQR* 93 (2003) 288–90. For ANE examples, see Riekele Borger, *Die Inschriften Assurbadons Königs Assyrien* (AfO; Beiheft 9; Graz, Austria: E. Weidner, 1956) 10–29, §11 (note esp. episode 10b and the lessening of Marduk’s anger); Clifton Daggett Gray, “The Borsippa Inscription of Nebuchadrezzar II,” *ABLI* 151; Clifton F. Harper, “Inscription on a Clay Cylinder of Nabonidus,” *ABLI* 164. See further ANE examples by Bedford, *Temple Restoration* 175, n. 192; E. Douglas van Buren, “The Building of a Temple Tower,” *RA* 46 (1952) 65–74, esp. 71–73; Essad Nassouhi, “Prisme d’Assurbānīpal daté de sa trentième année,” *AfO* 2 (1924–25) 97–106, esp. 99 line 19; Boda, “Dystopia to Myopia” 218; Hurowitz, *Exalted House* 140–43.

In Ezekiel, ascertaining the proper time to rebuild the temple in Jerusalem is clearly placed within YHWH's timetable. Furthermore, we can determine from pointers within the text that in Ezekiel's final vision, YHWH is no longer angry with his people. This is evinced in at least three ways: (1) the focus on restoration themes in previous chapters (34–39); (2) Israel living securely in its own land; and (3) the final destruction of Israel and YHWH's enemies (chaps. 38–39). What is more, the double dating of Ezekiel's culminating vision in 40:1 bolsters this conclusion. It had been 25 years since the exile had begun and 14 years had elapsed since the temple had been destroyed (33:21). Ezekiel is stressing the fact that this elapsed time had assuaged the anger of YHWH.³⁷ Once the temple and city are destroyed (cf. Ezek 33:21), Ezekiel's message transitions and begins to focus on restoration, peace for Israel in the land, and the kingship of YHWH (chaps. 34–48). Therefore, it is not surprising that the closing vision begins by a tour of a new temple situated in a land at peace.

Finally, in both ANE and biblical texts the task of temple reconstruction was to be undertaken by a divinely appointed king/leader (e.g. Moses, Solomon, and Zerubbabel).³⁸ In biblical contexts the appointment of an earthly ruler *preceded* the building of the temple and the enthronement of YHWH in his earthly abode (compare Exod 3:10 to 40:34 and 1 Kgs 1:38 to 5:1–5). In the case of Israel during the exile and thereafter foreign kings had in essence fulfilled the first part of this formula. For Ezekiel, YHWH fulfills both aspects of the established norm (note Ezek 20:33). Thus, no earthly king is pictured as coming to the throne prior to the construction of the temple because YHWH is already ethereally enthroned over Israel (chaps. 1–3; 34).³⁹ Therefore, Ezekiel needs only to emphasize the secondary earthly enthronement of YHWH *following* the temple tour (43:1–5).⁴⁰

³⁷ In support of this conclusion we can note that good portions of Ezekiel's book have been devoted to the apex of Israel's judgment, viz. the fall of Jerusalem, the destruction of the temple, and the exile of the people (cf. chaps. 8–12; 16; 21; 23; 24; 33 etc. see also Lev 26:31–39; Deut 28:49–52, 64, 65). Odell also notes that the twenty-fifth year "signifies the completion of the judgment of Jerusalem" (*Ezekiel* 487).

³⁸ Zerubbabel, a descendant of David, is the choice of both Zechariah and Haggai for the job of temple reconstruction (cf. Hag 1:14; Zech 4:6–10). See comments by Bedford, *Temple Restoration* 270–74. Bedford avers that the "proper" time for the rebuilding of the second temple only came when Zerubbabel arrived in Jerusalem. For a few ANE examples, see RIMB 2 176–7 §11 lines 1–19; 178–79 §12 lines 7–41 (both dealing with Esarhaddon); Clifton Daggett Gray, "The New York Inscription of Nebuchadnezzar II," *ABLI* 155; Robert F. Harper, "Inscription on a Clay Cylinder of Nabonidus," *ABLI* 163–64.

³⁹ Ezekiel's note that David will be a future ruler in 34:23–24 and 37:24–25 does not negate our ongoing hypothesis. Ezekiel appears to be connecting the prince of the final chapters with David as prince over the nation in chapters 34 and 37. We only find kingship in a futuristic sense mentioned once in 37:24; however in the following verse this is directly connected to the role of the prince. This idealized, albeit muted, kingship of David fits well within the context of the idealized future existence in the land. See also comments by J. Lust, "Ez., XX, 4–26 une parodie de l'histoire religieuse d'Israel," *ETL* 43 (1967) 526. Lust insists that Ezekiel is not looking back to earlier kingship but is looking forward to YHWH's central leadership from his new temple.

⁴⁰ In a similar vein, Bedford, in addressing the second temple states, "Haggai reworks the traditional understanding of the relationship between kingship, temple, blessing, and destruction of enemies arguing that temple reconstruction must *precede* the establishment of kingship, agricultural blessing, and the destruction of enemies. To rebuild the temple is not only to have Yahweh redress the current drought, it

2. *The command/decision to build.* The second step focuses on the command given to a king by the god(s) to (re)build a temple. Many times these instructions came through a dream, vision, omen, third party (i.e. a prophet),⁴¹ or through the stirring of a leader's heart.⁴² This step appears in both the tabernacle and temple constructions. In the case of the tabernacle, Moses is directly instructed to build the tabernacle at the command of YHWH (Exod 25:8–9). David seeks to build a temple for YHWH but is denied the privilege because of his shedding of blood (1 Chr 22:6–8; 28:2–3). As consolation, Nathan, a prophet, receives a vision and relays YHWH's word to David (2 Sam 7:4, 17) that it will be David's descendant who will build the temple, not David (2 Sam 7:12–13; 1 Chr 22:9–10; 28:5–29:19).⁴³ This approval paves the way for Solomon's building program.⁴⁴ The text records that Solomon also received a dream from YHWH both before and after the temple construction, thus displaying Solomon's divine favor (1 Kgs 3:4–15; 8:14–20; 9:3–9).⁴⁵ During the second temple building program, YHWH gives his command to rebuild the temple through both the stirring of the heart of a king or leader (Cyrus and Zerubbabel—Ezra 1:1; Hag 1:14 respectively) as well as by means of a prophet (i.e. Zechariah and Haggai).

In the Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian periods, rulers were careful not to build temples unless instructed by the god(s).⁴⁶ Esarhaddon in particular sought direction in these matters.⁴⁷ This often took on the form of extispicy and favorable omens however; sometimes the king had a dream such as in the case of the Neo-Babylonian ruler, Nabonidus (555–539 BC) and the famous Neo-Sumerian ruler, Gudea of Lagash (c. 2144–2124 BC).⁴⁸ As exhibited by these last two examples,

is also to re-establish the kingship of Yahweh and commence the restoration of Israel" (*Temple Restoration* 289, emphasis original).

⁴¹ Hurowitz offers ANE examples of third-party involvement in this process (*Exalted House* 151–52).

⁴² Such is the case with Cyrus, Zerubbabel, and the people who rebuilt the temple in Jerusalem (2 Chr 36:22; Ezra 1:1, 5; Hag 1:14). As for omens and divine signs, see D. D. Luckenbill, *Ancient Records of Assyria and Babylon* (2 vols.; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1927; repr. New York: Greenwood, 1968) 2:246, 259, 260 [hereafter *ARAB*].

⁴³ We also see this step in the case of Moses' instruction to the people and Haggai and Zechariah's prophetic counsel telling the people to build the temple.

⁴⁴ Stevenson notes that in an ANE context Solomon is performing a normative role as temple builder to the patron deity (*Vision of Transformation* 165).

⁴⁵ Some posit that the plans were given to Solomon in the first dream but are not recorded in the text. Cf. Kapelrud, "Temple Building" 56–62, esp. pp. 59–61.

⁴⁶ E.g. Preston P. Bruce, "Inscription of Nabopolassar" (Hilprecht, Winckler A and B), *ABLi* 131–33; 133, 134 respectively; Gray, "The Borsippa Inscription," *ABLi* 151; Gray, "The Senkereh Inscription of Nebuchadrezzar II," *ABLi* 154; Robert F. Harper, "Inscription on a Clay Cylinder of Nabonidus," *ABLi* 164–65. Numerous examples fall into this category and have been covered elsewhere. Cf. Boda, "Dystopia to Myopia" 218–21; Ellis, *Foundation Deposits* 6–8; Hurowitz, *Exalted House* 131–67.

⁴⁷ Borger, *Asarhaddons* 6–7, §3 Ass. B. 33–§4 Ass. C. iv.6; *ARAB* 2:243 §645.

⁴⁸ Hurowitz, *Exalted House* 143–60, here 149; *ARAB* 2:243 §645; 2:245 §651; 2:250 §659c; 2:260–61 §671. Cf. Borger, *Asarhaddons* 16–19, §11, episode 12–18; S. Langdon, "New Inscriptions of Nabuna'id," *AJSL* 32 (1915–16) 111–12, esp. line 63. In the case of Gudea we read, "On that day in a night vision (he saw) his king, Gudea saw the lord Ningirsu, (and) he commanded him to build his temple." Cf. "The Cylinders of Gudea" translated by Richard E. Averbeck (*COS* 2.155:419 lines 17–19 and 417–33; see also 419, n. 8). Cf. Dietz Otto Edzard, *Gudea and His Dynasty* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press,

over a long period of history, Mesopotamian leaders were careful to follow the exact directions of the deities in these matters.⁴⁹ Even when they did receive approval to build or rebuild temples, some went to great lengths to affirm and reaffirm the gods' decisions.⁵⁰

In Ezekiel, the prophet, as a "third party," received the vision but did not relay the information to a king. Instead, Ezekiel is instructed to inform the "house of Israel" (בית ישראל) directly concerning what he saw (40:4; 43:10–11).⁵¹ Interestingly, this circumventing of earthly kingship by means of direct address to the people resonates throughout Ezekiel's prophecy (cf. 8:1; 14:1, 6; 20:1, 30; 33:10; 36:22 etc.). The only references to Judah's earthly kings, with the exception of Ezekiel's dating sequence using Jehoiachin (Ezek 1:2), has been negative (cf. chaps. 12; 17; 19; 34). This by-passing of the king and focusing on the people for the purpose of instructing them, further supports my contention that Ezekiel is stressing that YHWH is both temple-builder and king.

3. *Description of the building and its vessels.* Although often coinciding with step 2, sometimes this step happened separately. The deity whose temple was being built had the prerogative of determining the particulars of the construction.⁵² These instructions dealing with the dimensions and ornamentation were then relayed to a ruler by supernatural means. We see this in the case of Nabopolassar and Gudea.⁵³ In the account of Gudea no detailed dimensions are given but only general notations that the god(s) gave instructions concerning the details of the temple.⁵⁴ Con-

1997) 68–88, Cyl A [hereafter RIME 3/1]. For works comparing the Dream of Gudea and Ezekiel 40–48, cf. Diane Sharon, "A Biblical Parallel to a Sumerian Temple Hymn? Ezekiel 40–48 and Gudea," *JANES* 24 (1996) 99–109; and Jerrold S. Cooper, *The Curse of Agade* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1983), esp. pp. 57–61, text 4. Also during the reign of Nabonidus we find a similar account where Nabonidus has a dream and is told to build a temple for Sin as "quickly" as possible. Cf. C. J. Gadd, "The Harran Inscription of Nabonidus," *AnSt* 8 (1958) 56–57, col. 1 lines 11–12.

⁴⁹ See further the work of E. Douglas van Buren, "Foundation Rites for a New Temple," *Or* 21 (1952) 293–306, esp. 293, 298.

⁵⁰ Frankfort notes how Esarhaddon went to three different shrines (i.e. of Shamash, Adad, and Nergal) to gain assurance of his building endeavors (*Kingship* 270). Nebuchadnezzar inquired of Shamash, Ramman, and Marduk before restoring the temple of E-babbara. Cf. Gray, "New York Inscription" 156.

⁵¹ Donna Runnalls, "The King as Temple Builder: A Messianic Typology," in *Spirit within Structure: Essays in Honor of George Johnston on the Occasion of His Seventieth Birthday* (ed. Dikran Y. Hadidian; Allison Park, PA: Pickwick, 1983) 22. On the importance of these two literary links to the intent of Ezekiel, see Zimmerli, *Ezekiel* 2 418.

⁵² Block, *Ezekiel* 2 510. Block goes on to point out that if a ruler did not follow the plans given to him, the temple would not stand. Cf. J. J. M. Roberts, "Yahweh's Foundations in Zion (Isa 28:16)," *JBL* 106 (1987) 27–45, esp. 41, 44, and van Buren, "Foundation Rites for a New Temple" 298.

⁵³ John M. Lundquist notes that "Nabopolassar stated that he took the measurements of Etemenanki, the temple tower in the main precinct of Babylon, under the guidance of Shamash, Adad, and Marduk, and that he kept the measurements in his memory as a treasure" ("What is a Temple? A Preliminary Typology," in *The Quest for the Kingdom of God: Studies in Honor of George E. Mendenhall* [ed. H. B. Huffmon, F. A. Spina, and A. R. W. Green; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1983] 211). For the actual text see, S. Langdon, *Die neubabylonischen Königsinschriften* (Vorderasiatische Bibliothek 4; Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1912) 62–63.

⁵⁴ The god Enki directed Gudea about the plan for the temple (Cyl. A xvii. 5–17). Gudea confirms his plan through extispicy (Cyl. A xx. 5–12). Cf. "The Cylinders of Gudea," translated by Averbeck (*COA* 2.155:426–28) and RIME 3/1, 79–81.

versely, Exodus is the best known biblical parallel for this step whereby YHWH gives Moses exact specifications for the tabernacle (cf. Exod 25:9–30:38; 36–40). We also find a brief description of the temple given to Solomon by David (cf. 1 Chr 28:11–19; 1 Kgs 6:1–7:14–51) and to the exiles by Cyrus (Ezra 6:3–5). In the former case we are left wondering why the details of the temple are not recorded in the text the way they were with the tabernacle.⁵⁵ The text seems to intimate that the dimensions were given to David who then recorded them.⁵⁶ In Ezekiel's temple, this step is subsumed under step 6 below where the completed temple is described and the fashioning of vessels for the temple is absent (except for a wooden altar; Ezek 41:22). This lacuna again pushes forward the notion that YHWH is both king and builder.

4. *Preparations made and materials collected.* The fourth step includes a variety of phases. At this juncture the location for the temple is chosen, orientation of the building is decided,⁵⁷ raw materials are gathered, and a labor force is prepared.⁵⁸ To what degree site preparation began before all the needed materials were in place is open to debate.⁵⁹ We know that Moses, David/Solomon, and the people of Haggai's day made preparations by gathering building materials in advance.⁶⁰

We also see the procurement of skilled laborers to do the work. In Moses' day YHWH prepared two men to oversee this task (Oholiab and Bezalel—Exod 31:1–11; 35:30–36:1). In the case of Solomon's temple this step is not clear, although YHWH seems to have allowed Solomon to make the decisions in this regard (2 Chr 2:12, 17–18). This seems to be inferred from the negotiations between Solomon and Hiram (1 Kgs 5:6–7, 18; 2 Chr 2:7, 13, 14—Hiram sends Hiram-abi; cf. 1 Chr 22:2, 15). In the ANE, rulers such as Esarhaddon used divination and extispicy in order to find out the gods' choices for the task of fashioning cult objects.⁶¹ In

⁵⁵ This question has plagued Jewish scholars for centuries. See comments by Yadin, *Temple Scroll* 115–16. Note also the Jewish rabbinical interpretation in *Ag. Ber.*, which states that the temple scroll and plans were transmitted throughout the generations from the time of Moses until Samuel gave the plans to David who in turn gave them to Solomon. Cf. Lieve M. Teugels, *Aggadat Bereshit* (Leiden: Brill, 2001) 117, n. 451.

⁵⁶ In 1 Chr 28:11–12 we are told that David gave the temple plan to Solomon. In verse 12 it appears that some of the design came from David himself while in verse 19 David says that the plan had come “from the hand of God upon me.”

⁵⁷ For a discussion of this facet along with a detailed bibliography, see Lundquist, “What is a Temple?” 210–11.

⁵⁸ *ARAB*, 2:262 §675. When rebuilding Marduk's temple in Babylon Esarhaddon states, “I mustered all of my men (subjects), of the whole of Karduniash (Babylonia), I caused them to carry the basket and headpad.”

⁵⁹ Ellis places the preparation of the site before the actual gathering of the materials (*Foundation Deposits* 8–13). While in the tabernacle construction this step is eliminated because of its mobility, David appears to have gathered most of the materials before the temple was actually started. In the second temple phase, the procurement of materials seems to coincide with the laying of the temple foundation (Ezra 3:7, 10).

⁶⁰ Cf. Exod 35:4–29; 1 Kgs 5:17–19; 1 Chr 22:3–4, 14–16; 28–29; 2 Chr 1:18–2:9 [Heb]; Hag 1:8; Ezra 1:4–11; 6:3–5. So, too, Hurowitz, *Exalted House* 171–223.

⁶¹ Cf. Hurowitz, *Exalted House* 158–59 and Borger, *Asarhaddon* 82, episode 53, lines 11–20a.

Ezekiel this step concerning the preparation phase of the temple is absent—once again YHWH takes care of it.

5. *Construction begins: the laying of the foundation.* Having gathered materials, the construction of the temple was ready to commence. Often exact dates were kept which marked the beginning and completion of the work (cf. Exod 40:1, 17; 1 Kgs 6:1, 37–38; 2 Chr 3:2; Ezra 1:1; 5:13). Next, the site of the temple was prepared and excavated, which was usually on the same foundation/location of a previous temple.⁶² In Babylon the laying of the foundation of a temple required solemn rituals performed by the *barû*⁶³ and *kalû* priests.⁶⁴ The *barû* priest appears to have been responsible for locating the ancient site of the temple and discovering its “earlier plan” whereas the *kalû* priest performed ongoing rituals and lamentations throughout the construction process.⁶⁵ This attention to cultic ritual in association with the construction placated the gods while the new temple was being built. Often a brick⁶⁶ from the former temple’s foundation was ritualistically removed and placed in a ritually clean place and cared for by the *kalû* priest until it could be placed in the new foundation.⁶⁷ As in many of the steps throughout the (re)building process of a temple, favorable timing was of utmost importance.⁶⁸

⁶² For a list of Neo-Babylonian temples constructed on previous temple sites, see Ellis, *Foundation Deposits* 14, n. 46. Ellis (9–12) gives examples of temple construction on new or previously non-cultic sites; however for the sake of our discussion we will focus on the regular procedures for rebuilding a former temple. Cf. G. Goossens, “Les recherches historiques à l’époque néo-babylonienne,” *RA* 42 (1948) 149–59, esp. 151–52 for his discussion on site location. For a discussion on the archaeological site excavation of an ancient temple cf. G. van Driel, “De Uruk-Nederzetting op de Jebel Aruda: een Voorlopig Bericht (Stand eind 1976),” *Phoenix* (Voorzatisch-Egyptisch Genootschap “Ex Oriente Lux”) 23 (1977) 42–64, esp. 46–52; and Sally Dunham, “Bricks for the Temples of Šara and Ninurra,” *RA* 76 (1982) 27–41, esp. 38–41 for a closer look at the temple platform.

⁶³ The *barû* priest seems to function as an overseer who determined the exact location of the original foundation during the excavation and demolition process. He would also investigate the foundation record to make sure that the new temple construction corresponded with the former temple. Cf. Boda, “Dystopia to Myopia,” 227 and Ellis, *Foundations*, 14 n. 45. See also “Ritual for the Repair of a Temple,” translated by A. Sachs (*ANET*, 340–41).

⁶⁴ Ellis, *Foundation Deposits*, 13. See further Lundquist, “What is a Temple?” 209–10; van Buren, “Foundation Rites for a New Temple,” 293–306; Runnalls, “The King as Temple Builder,” 19; and R. Borger, “Das Tempelbau-Ritual K48+,” *ZA* 61 (1971) 72–80, esp. pp. 74–78.

⁶⁵ Ellis, *Foundation Deposits*, 14, 34 n. 45. For further descriptions of the *kalû* priest’s duties, see Boda, “Dystopia to Myopia,” 224, 227–28.

⁶⁶ Often referred to as the *libittu mahṛitu* in Akkadian. For a discussion on brick sizes for construction purposes and how they were ordered by quantity cf. Dunham, “Bricks for the Temples of Šara and Ninurra” 27–41.

⁶⁷ Cf. A. Leo Oppenheim, “The Mesopotamian Temple,” in *The Biblical Archaeologist Reader I* (ed. G. Ernest Wright and David Noel Freedman; Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1977) 162–63. See further comments by Boda, “Dystopia to Myopia” 223. Ellis comments, “The single brick embodied the essence of the god’s home and bridged the gap between the destruction of the old building and the founding of the new” (*Foundation* 29). For a copy of the actual ceremony for the *kalû* and *barû* priests, see “Ritual for the Repair of a Temple,” translated by A. Sachs (*ANET* 339–41) and Frankfort, *Kingship* 271–72. See also a similar *kalû* ritual text in Borger, “Tempelbau” 72–80.

⁶⁸ See *ANET* 339. Here we read that any repair or rebuilding needed to be undertaken in “an auspicious month, on a favorable day, in the night.” See further *ANET* 340–41 for similar examples.

Beyond the obvious reason of placating the god(s), the main purpose for identifying a previously existing temple's foundation and building thereon was in order to bring continuity in worship from one generation/temple to the next (cf. Ezra 6:3).⁶⁹ Often former kings' foundation records and deposits were unearthed in order to gain a thorough knowledge of how the original temple was built along with its materials and quantities to be used.⁷⁰ Rulers from the Neo-Babylonian period, the exact era of Ezekiel's sojourn in Babylon, were especially careful in this regard.⁷¹ These rulers were vigilant in locating these foundation records.⁷² Naboni-

⁶⁹ Joan Oates, "Ur and Eridu, the Prehistory," *Iraq* 22 (1960) 32–50, esp. p. 45 and n. 44. Oates also notes that building upon a previous foundation was to add continuity to "religious beliefs." There is evidence of this continuity in the construction of Solomon's temple on the site of the threshing floor of Araunah (2 Sam 24:18–25) and Cyrus's decree concerning the second temple. In the case of David's choice of Araunah's threshing floor, the location was given by the command of YHWH (through the prophet Gad—vv. 18–19) to David to establish an altar for him (2 Chr 3:1). This has also been traditionally connected to Abraham's near sacrifice of Isaac on Mt. Moriah (cf. Genesis 22). Furthermore, Ezra 6:3 states that the foundations of the temple were to be "retained." In this verse the Aramaic term סבל is uncertain (and rare) but seems to denote some connection with the former temple due to the use of the causative shaphel passive which can connote the "preservation" of a former thing. Also, in the context, Cyrus's decree is dealing specifically with the "re"building of the temple, not the building of a new temple. See definitions of סבל in Alger F. Johns, *A Short Grammar of Biblical Aramaic* (3d ed., Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1972) 103.

⁷⁰ Hurowitz, *Exalted House* 132–33. Apparently the common trend was for kings to place images of themselves in the foundation. One text from the period of Nabopolassar reads "I [Nabopolassar] made an image of my royal person carrying a basket, and deposited it in the foundation." Cf. Ellis, *Foundation* 26 and N. Strassmaier, "Inscriben von Nabopolassar und Smerdis," *ZA* 4 (1889) 110–11, lines 100–4. Here Strassmaier translates the text as, "Ein Bildniss meiner Majestät, Segen bringend (?) liess ich anfertigen, und im Fundamente hinterlegen." Cf. Boda, "Dystopia to Myopia" 229 and Dunham, "Bricks" 27–41; and Frankfort, *Kingship* 271. See also the numerous Neo-Babylonian texts presented by Ellis, *Foundation* 156–57 and the work of Goossens, "Les recherches" 149–59.

⁷¹ Cf. Langdon, *Die neubabylonischen* 62, Nr. 1, 2:44–46 (Nabopolassar); 76, Nr. 1, 2:12–35; 78, Nr. 2, 3:22–27; 92, Nr. 9, 2:56–59; 96, Nr. 10, 2:2–6; 98, Nr. 11, 2:7; 110, Nr. 13, 3:37–43; 142, Nr. 16, 2:17–20; 194, Nr. 27a, 2:17–21; Nr. 27b 13–15 (all Nebuchadnezzar); 216, Nr. 2, 2:21–22 (Neriglissar); 224–26, Nr. 1, 2:49–65 (Nabonidus). As cited by Roberts "Yahweh's Foundations" 40 n. 53. Nabonidus is known to have taken this precaution by finding the foundation markers of former kings even as far back as Hammurapi, 700 years earlier while Nebuchadnezzar had only excavated to the building records of Burnaburiash. Cf. Stephen Langdon, "New Inscriptions of Nabuna'id," *AJSL* 32 (1915–16) 112 (so, too, Boda, "Dystopia to Myopia" 222; and Goossens, "Les recherches" 154–56). The text (Col 1, lines 1–15) states that "As to Ebarra, temple of Shamash of Sippar, that temple which Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, a former king, had torn down, and whose ancient foundation record had not attained, that Ebarra he built and gave it unto Shamash his lord. Within 52 years the walls of that temple sagged and went to decay. I Nabuna'id king of Babylon [care-taker] of Esagila and Ezida, in my legitimate reign, [which Sin and Shamash love] that Ebarra, [I tore down] and excavated its [excavation]. Its ancient foundation record [which the former Sargon] had made I saw and upon the foundation record (which) [Sargon had made, not a finger-breadth too far above] not a finger-breadth too far beyond, [its foundations I laid and I fixed] its bricks. Cf. Langdon, "New Inscriptions of Nabuna'id" 110. See also Hurowitz, *Exalted House* 158; Frankfort, *Kingship* 270–71; Ellis, *Foundation Deposits* 13, n. 41.

We also see this in the Neo-Assyrian period with Esarhaddon. Several texts follow a similar pattern. "Enirgalana ("House, Prince of Heaven"), the cella of the goddess *Ištar*, my lady, which is inside Eanna, which a previous king built, became old and dilapidated. I sought its (original) emplacement (and) repaired its dilapidated parts and baked bricks from a (ritually) pure kiln." Cf. RIMB 2, 185, lines 11–13. Another text (*ARAB* 2:271 §702) states, "The earlier temple of Assur, which Shalmaneser, son of Adad-nirāri, king of Assyria, a prince who lived before me, had built, fell into decay That temple,—the

dus, for example, prided himself in his ability to outdo all his predecessors in finding original foundation deposits.⁷³ Once the details of the foundation records were recovered, solemn ceremonies including prayers from the king accompanied the site preparation, laying of the foundation, and the molding of the first brick (usually by the enthroned ruler).⁷⁴ Once these foundation ceremonies were complete, the formal building process began with joyfulness and vigor.⁷⁵

Biblically, these types of celebrations only occur with the second temple construction (cf. Ezra 3:10–12).⁷⁶ The OT is silent when it comes to celebrations connected to the laying of the foundation during Solomon's day.⁷⁷ Instead, both the DtrH and the Chronicler give a more pedantic recitation of the process, dates, and materials used. It appears that both were more concerned with describing the celebrations of the *completed* temple (see step 7 below). Nevertheless, Ezra 3:10 intimates that David had established a ceremony for celebrating the laying of the temple foundation.

Once again, this step is missing in Ezekiel. Instead Ezekiel sees a completed temple of which he is only an observer. There is no ceremony, no foundation excavations, and no earthly king.⁷⁸ Ironically, the only reference to previous kings in Ezekiel's vision is in reference to their defiling of the former temple by their corpses (Ezek 43:7). It is the absence of this particular step, which is the heart of the prophet's rhetorical purpose in chapters 40–43. It was this step of foundation excavation with its accompanying rituals to ensure continuity with the former temple,

place of its site I did not change, but upon gold, silver, precious stones, herbs, (and) cedar (*hashur*)—oil I established its foundation walls (and) laid its brickwork.”

⁷² Foundation records came in various sizes, materials, and locations. For a discussion on these topics, see Ellis, *Foundation Deposits*, particularly chapters 3–6.

⁷³ Langdon, “New Inscriptions of Nabuna'id” 102–17, esp. 110–16. Harper, “Inscription on a Clay Cylinder of Nabonidus,” *ABLit* 166. Here Nabonidus declares he found the old foundation records of Naram-Sin, the son of Sargon.

⁷⁴ Ellis, *Foundation* 31, 34. Ellis (p. 31) notes the inscription of Merodach-baladan II, which states that the king “laid its (the temple's) foundations with devotion, prayer, and prostration.” Cf. also the text and translation from C. J. Gadd, “Inscribed Barrel Cylinder of Marduk-apla-iddina II,” *Iraq* 15/2 (1953) 125 and the comments of Goossens, “Les recherches,” 153. Boda points out that rituals for site preparation were performed by exorcists known as *āšīpu* and *mašmāšu* (“Dystopia to Myopia” 227–28). Also, Esarhaddon states that he personally performed the task of beginning the construction of the temple at *Ešarra*. Cf. Borger, *Asarhaddon* 4–5 §2 IV 31–V 26. For text and translation, see Ellis, *Foundations* 177. See also similar statements by Nabopolassar in Ellis, *Foundations* 179. For transliteration, translation, and cuneiform text cf. J. N. Strassmaier, “Inchriften von Nabopolassar und Smerdis,” *ZA* 4 (1889) 106–52, esp. 110–12 (lines 99–131) and 133–34, respectively.

⁷⁵ Frankfort, *Kingship* 272–74. Ellis points out that the building of temples was also seen as the work of the gods (*Foundation Deposits* 21).

⁷⁶ One could posit implicit celebrations connected to the second temple in Zech 4:6–10 and 8:9. There is also some debate concerning the details of who laid the temple foundation and when. This may have been a two-step process with Sheshbazzar only laying the deepest sections of the foundation with Zerubbabel completing it at a later date. For all the various possibilities, see Bedford, *Temple Restoration* 95–111; A. Gelston, “The Foundations of the Second Temple,” *VT* 16 (1966) 232–35; and F. I. Anderson, “Who Built the Second Temple,” *ABR* 6 (1958) 1–35, esp. 10–22. For an excellent summary discussion, see Boda, “Dystopia to Myopia” 233–34, n. 93.

⁷⁷ The mobility of the tabernacle precludes it from this step.

⁷⁸ Is it possible that the double dating of 40:1 is to mark the “beginning” date?

which would have been the most offensive for Ezekiel and YHWH. This particular step was the most visual and ritualistic according to ANE temple (re)construction procedures. Ezekiel purposely omitted this step as a witness against his audience that any former aspects of worship associated with the pre-exilic temple were not acceptable in the future or in association with YHWH's new temple. As I will note in my comments on 43:10–11 below, the focus on measuring the proportion of the temple betrays this didactic purpose. The primary reason for this rests in the fact that the former temple was completely defiled (cf. Ezekiel 8–11). This is further supported by Ezekiel's relentless attack on all aspects of the nation's worship and their defiled history (e.g. chaps. 6; 13–15; 16; 18; 20; 23; 24; 34).⁷⁹ Whereas ANE temple builders desired not to anger the gods by improper building practices, Israel, because of its defiled worship, had already angered God to the point of bringing upon the nation the destruction of the temple, the city, and exile.

Therefore, worship practices from the old temple were not to be repeated in the new period of YHWH's rule. YHWH, through his prophet, makes sure that no connection with the old temple is present, materially or cultically. Now that is not to say that there was to be no continuity between the two temples based upon Mosaic laws as established by YHWH, but rather that any continuity with the defiled preexilic worship in Solomon's temple was to be erased.⁸⁰ Once again there was only one individual who could build the new temple by sidestepping such important ANE temple construction norms, YHWH himself.

6. *The building's description.* The biblical texts differ greatly from those of the ANE when it comes to the architectural details of temples.⁸¹ In the case of the tabernacle, and Solomon's and Ezekiel's temples, very specific details and dimensions are given. Indeed, Ezekiel's description is so pedantic it is almost to the point of *ad nauseam*. Conversely, completed temple descriptions found in Mesopotamia record only general descriptions often in poetic form.⁸² The writers were generally more interested in the types and value of the materials used as opposed to the actual de-

⁷⁹ One could argue that every chapter from 4–24 contains a diatribe of some sort against Israel's past sin and their defiled history. Of the Major Prophets, only Ezekiel presents Israel's history in a predominantly negative light (e.g. Ezekiel 20). For a discussion on the historical peculiarities of chapter 20, see Brian Peterson, "Ezekiel's Perspective of Israel's History: Selective Revisionism?" in *Prophets and Prophecy and Ancient Israelite Historiography* (ed. Mark J. Boda and Lyssa Wray Beal; Winona Lake, IN.: Eisenbrauns, 2013) 295–313.

⁸⁰ Some argue that Ezekiel's "law" of the temple and the ensuing statutes for the priests differ from those proposed by earlier priestly sources in the Pentateuch. Is it possible that the lack of consistency may be rooted in the prophet's desire to change former ways of worship? Jewish tradition states that Hananiah ben Hezekiah ben Garon, head of the school of Shammai from the time of Jesus (i.e. the generation before the fall of the city), toiled over the two bodies of literature to try to harmonize them. Cf. G. F. Moore, *Judaism in the First Centuries of the Christian Era* (3 vols., Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1927–1930) 1:246–47. For the Jewish sources see *Shab.* 13b; *Hag.* 13a; and *Men.* 45a. For a discussion on the "Law of the Temple," see Tuell, *Law of the Temple in Ezekiel 40–48* 42–67.

⁸¹ Tuell, *Ezekiel* 296. In comparing Ezekiel's temple design with that of the temple in the Qumran Temple Scroll, Tuell points up that the "impracticality of design does not negate realistic intent."

⁸² For an ANE example of the general nature of building descriptions, see Borger, *Asarhaddon* 5, §2 Ass. A, V 27–VI 27. For a discussion on the general descriptions on the sizes of temples, see Hurowitz, *Exalted House*, 251–59.

tails concerning the size of the structure.⁸³ The biblical writers tended to be more specific based upon the purposes of a given text.⁸⁴ Even in the case of Solomon's temple (1 Kings 6) minimal detail is related to the reader compared to the tabernacle description (Exodus 36–39) and Ezekiel's temple (Ezekiel 40–42). Of all the temple texts in the OT, Ezekiel's architectural descriptions by far surpass even the tabernacle descriptions.⁸⁵ Not surprisingly, this step, which does not have a human element (other than the prophet), is included in Ezekiel. We will touch on this more in section V below.

7. *Temple dedication, enthronement of the deity, blessings flow.* Once the temple was completed, dedicatory festivities generally followed including the enthronement of the deity in the temple.⁸⁶ In the OT various aspects of these elements appear throughout the temple and tabernacle dedication accounts with Solomon's temple ceremonies being the most complete (1 Kings 8).⁸⁷ In ANE temple dedications and (re)enthronement rituals, the statue of the deity was adorned in lavish robes and paraded through the streets and placed within the new temple complex accompanied by celebrations and sacrifices.⁸⁸ The Ark of the Covenant serves a close parallel to these ANE rituals. In Exod 40:34 and 1 Kgs 8:10–11 it is *after* the Ark is humanly placed in the Holy of Holies that YHWH's presence descends in a cloud. The human element thus plays a role in these particular enthronement texts but none in Ezekiel's vision! YHWH enthrones himself (Ezek 43:1–5).

Another important outcome of the building program is that the earthly-enthroned deity brought blessings to the land. Many times these blessings came in the form of natural phenomena such as abundant crops and good weather. This appears in the Akkadian *ex eventu* prophecies (i.e. Marduk and Uruk).⁸⁹ Interestingly,

⁸³ Hurowitz, *Exalted House*, 244–45. However, there are examples of detailed measurements being given for construction projects most notably for the land being developed in the process. E.g. *ARAB* 2:163–7 §372–88.

⁸⁴ For example, the details of the tabernacle, at least canonically, are pedantically recited both before (Exodus 25–31) and after (Exodus 35–40) its construction with the theological purpose of showing the reader that Israel had learned to follow the instructions of the Lord after the golden calf fiasco (Exodus 32–34). For a discussion of the literary-critical issues of the golden calf incident as it relates to the surrounding tabernacle narratives, see W. Ross Blackburn, *The God Who Makes Himself Known: The Missionary Heart of the Book of Exodus* (NSBT 28; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2012) 153–96.

⁸⁵ The writer of the description of the Mosaic temple spends a lot of time giving details about the furniture in the tabernacle; items, which are missing from Ezekiel's temple.

⁸⁶ For a detailed list of ANE texts dealing with temple dedication, see Hurowitz, *Exalted House* 280–84.

⁸⁷ With the completion of the tabernacle, as with Ezekiel's vision, YHWH's glory fills the sanctuary but actual celebrations are not recorded (Exod 40:34; Ezek 43:1–5). In the second temple, no mention is made of YHWH's presence filling the new temple, although celebrations are recorded (Ezra 6:15–22).

⁸⁸ For example, see “Program of the Pageant of the Statue of the God Anu at Uruk,” translated by A. Sachs (*ANET* 342); Oppenheim, “Mesopotamian Temple” 163–65; Frankfort, *Kingship* 265–67, 274; and Ellis, *Foundation Deposits* 32–34.

⁸⁹ Cf. “The Marduk Prophecy,” translated by Tremper Longman III (*COS* 1.149:480–1); Benjamin R. Foster, *Before the Muses: An Anthology of Akkadian Literature* (Bethesda, MD: CDL, 2005) 388–91; Daniel Block, “Marduk Prophecy,” in *Readings from the Near East: Primary Sources for Old Testament Study* (ed. Bill T. Arnold and Bryan E. Beyer; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002) 216. For the Uruk prophecies, see Ar-

Gudea's construction of Ningirsu's temple is one example where blessings are promised even *before* the temple's completion.⁹⁰ In Solomon's day blessing marked most of his rule whereas the exilic community were upbraided for their sin which thwarted YHWH's blessing before and after the temple construction (e.g. 1 Kings 10; Haggai 1; Mal 3:10)

In Ezekiel's closing vision blessings also flow from YHWH's self-enthronement in his new temple. Of all the steps of the ANE temple building process, this step is perhaps second in importance only to step 5. Israel is depicted as living in the land with utopian boundaries (chap. 48) and blessings beyond compare. The "prince" is restored, the priesthood is renewed, the land and rivers are productive (47:9–12), and an abundance of water flows to the most desolate and parched regions of Israel (chap. 47).⁹¹

To summarize our discussion thus far, the human element of the temple (re)building regimen, biblical or otherwise, is blatantly eliminated in Ezekiel's vision. Never is the command to build given, no materials are gathered, foundation celebrations and kingly supervision are lacking and construction never begins!⁹² Conversely, the steps where humans play little or no role are emphasized (i.e. the nation at peace, the description of the temple, and heavenly blessings). Even if an exilic audience had not been involved as slave labor on Babylonian temple-building projects, they still would have recognized Ezekiel's silence on key steps in light of the biblical accounts. Nevertheless, while many of the lacunas in procedural method

nold and Beyer, eds., *Readings from the Near East* 217; and Hermann Hunger and Stephen Kaufman, "A New Akkadian Prophecy Text," *JAOs* 95/3 (1975) 371–75.

⁹⁰ RIME 3/1, 75–76, Cyl A xi lines 1–17. The text states, "When you, O true shepherd Gudea, will effectively start (to build) my House for me, the foremost house of all lands, the right arm of *Lagaš*, the Thunderbird roaring over the whole sky, my kingly Eninnu, then I will call up to heaven for a humid wind so that surely abundance will come to you from above and the land will immediately (or: under your reign) gain in abundance. When the foundations of my House will be laid, abundance will surely come at that same time: the great fields will 'raise their hands' to you, dykes and canals will 'raise the neck' to you, water will—for your profit—even rise to 'hills' where it never reaches (in other years). Under your rule more fat (than ever) will be poured, more wool (than ever) will be weighed in Sumer."

⁹¹ For further discussion, see Moshe Greenberg, "The Design and Themes of Ezekiel's Program of Restoration," *Int* 38 (1984) 181–208, esp. 196, 208; Menahem Haran, "The Law Code of Ezekiel XL–XLVIII and its Relation to the Priestly School," *HUCA* 50 (1979) 61, 65; J. Gordon McConville, "Priests and Levites in Ezekiel: A Crux in the Interpretation of Israel's History," *TynBul* 34 (1983) 3–31; and Iain M. Duguid, "Putting Priests in Their Place: Ezekiel's Contribution to the History of the Old Testament Priesthood," in *Ezekiel's Hierarchical World: Wrestling with a Tiered Reality* (ed. Stephen L. Cook and Corrine L. Patton; SBLSymSer 31; Atlanta: SBL, 2004) 43–59. Another unifying factor associated with Ezekiel's temple and those of the ANE is the close association of temples and water. In chapter 47 Ezekiel goes to great lengths to show the effects of this life-giving stream flowing from under the eastern threshold of the temple. This idea is picked up in the bronze sea of Solomon's temple (1 Chr 18:8) as well as other ANE temples. Cf. Clifford, "The Temple in the Ugaritic Myth of Baal," 145. H. W. Fairman notes that at the temple of Edfu in Egypt, during solemn rituals, "sacred" water was drawn from a well located under the east wall ("Worship and Festivals in an Egyptian Temple," *BJRL* 37 [1954–55] 177). See also comments by Jacob Milgrom, "Whence the Unique Features of Ezekiel's Sanctuary," (paper presented at the annual meeting of the SBL, Boston, MA, November 24, 2008) 1–17.

⁹² Contra Hurowitz who propounds that "[a]n explicit and detailed command to build a temple at some unspecified date in the future concludes the book of Ezekiel (chaps. 40–48)" (*Exalted House* 138).

are only intimated, Ezekiel explicitly draws attention to the differences in foundation proportions both at the beginning and end of his temple tour.

V. EZEKIEL'S AND SOLOMON'S TEMPLES COMPARED DIMENSIONALLY

Differences in how Ezekiel dealt with steps 5 and 6 above come to the forefront in our discussion when one considers the specific language used by Ezekiel to describe his temple measurements *vis-à-vis* the Solomonic temple. As we noted, for Ezekiel there was to be no continuity between the two especially when dealing with defiling worship practices. Two important notations serving an inclusio-like role in the temple vision help draw attention to Ezekiel's purposes in this regard, viz. the length of the cubit being used by the heavenly tour guide (cf. Ezek 40:5 and 43:13).⁹³

To start, it is important to note that the only vertical dimension given in the vision refers to the height of the encompassing walls (6+ cubits cf. Ezek 40:5). This has been touted by some as evidence of the non-literality or the theological focus of the vision.⁹⁴ Now while this may have validity in light of the gradations of the holy from the profane, there may be another reason for this omission. It is very possible that Ezekiel is more concerned with the two-dimensional layout precisely because of his rhetorical purpose of showing the differences between the old and new temple foundations. Moreover, few would disagree with the conclusion that Ezekiel's temple complex differs from Solomon's especially when one considers the sheer size and elevation of the former (500x500 cubits; cf. Ezek 42:20 and 40:22; 31, 49).⁹⁵ While space does not allow for a rehashing of the minutiae related to the measurements of Ezekiel's temple, one specific architectural feature where

⁹³ The cubit (אמה) of this period is estimated to measure about 20.5 inches. Cf. Block, *Ezekiel* 2 517. Therefore, the temple complex is approximately 854 feet square. The size of Ezekiel's temple would also stretch beyond the temple mount of Solomon's day into the Tyropoeon Valley to the west. Cf. Zimmerli, *Ezekiel* 2 361, 362, 380, 401. For a comparison of Solomon's and Ezekiel's temples, see Zimmerli, *Ezekiel* 2 358–60, 379–80, 400–1.

⁹⁴ Liss, "Describe the Temple to the House of Israel" 122–43. Stevenson argues that the idea of a "blueprint" genre here in 40–48 is misguided. She proposes that Ezekiel's vision was primarily for the purpose of defining "spaces" or gradations of separation of the holy from the common (*Vision of Transformation* 4–5, 19–36, 116). Therefore the problematic absence of "vertical" measurements in this picture of the temple would be solved.

⁹⁵ The text records no less than 25 steps as one moves from the outer regions of the temple to the level of the Holy of Holies. While there are no vertical notations for these steps one can safely estimate at least eight inches per step, which would give the temple an overall vertical dimension of somewhere around 16.67 feet. Some see parallels between Ezekiel's stepped-temple and the ancient Babylonian ziggurats. Cf. Milgrom, "Whence the Unique Features of Ezekiel's Sanctuary" 1–17, esp. 6 and Odell, *Ezekiel* 484. Interestingly, Donald J. Wiseman points up that during the reigns of Nabopolassar and his son, Nebuchadnezzar, they restored the "ancient temple-tower (ziggurat) named Etemenanki ("The Building which is the Foundation of Heaven and Earth) [which] dominated the city" (*Nebuchadnezzar and Babylon: The Schweich Lectures of the British Academy 1983* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985] 68–73, here 68).

the two temples *appear* to be connected dimensionally will be considered; the temple proper.⁹⁶

The temple building itself comprises the vestibule (אולם cf. Ezek 40:49), nave (הלל cf. Ezek 41:2 implicit), and Holy of Holies (קדש הקדשים cf. Ezek 41:4).⁹⁷ In both the pre-exilic temple and Ezekiel's temple the reader is told that the dimensions are 60x20 cubits (אמה)—what at first glance looks like a one-for-one parallel (cf. Ezek 41:2–4). Yet these dimensions are problematic in light of the old cubit of the Iron Age (about 17.5 inches) and the longer cubit of the Neo-Babylonian period (about 20.5 inches). R. B. Y. Scott notes that according to 2 Chr 3:3, Solomon's temple measurements followed the old cubit. He derives this shorter length from calculations based upon more precise measurements noted in the Siloam tunnel inscription and other Israelite structures of this earlier period.⁹⁸ As noted, in 40:5 and 43:13 Ezekiel makes it clear that the cubit being used for measuring the new temple was a longer cubit (i.e. a cubit and a handbreadth). Therefore, while the size of Solomon's temple may be the same number of cubits in width and length, the actual dimensions based upon the older cubit are much smaller. Solomon's temple is roughly 87.5 feet by 29.17 feet whereas Ezekiel's is 102.42 feet by 34.17 feet. Making things even more problematic is the reality that Ezekiel's dimensions do not include the thicknesses of the walls.⁹⁹ Ezekiel is purposefully making it clear by his notations on the size of the cubit being used by the divine guide that the recorded dimensions differ from Solomon's temple. Moreover, Ezekiel's temple sits on a reformulated Mt. Zion (Ezek 40:2) possibly south of the actual city.¹⁰⁰ Once again, all continuity between the two temples, even topographically, has been re-conditioned.¹⁰¹

Of course the detailed measurements given in the temple vision also have a theological purpose of separating the holy from the profane (cf. Ezek 42:20; 43:12);

⁹⁶ For a breakdown of the temple dimensions, see Merrill F. Unger, "The Temple Vision of Ezekiel," *BSac* 105/420 (1949) 418–22; idem, "The Temple Vision of Ezekiel," *BSac* 106/421 (1949) 48–64; idem, "The Temple Vision of Ezekiel," *BSac* 106/422 (1949) 169–77. Bennett approaches the detailed measurements in the vision from a psychoanalytical perspective even though he attempts to sidestep this moniker ("Ezekiel's Geometric Vision" 411–38). Cf. Bennett (p. 413, n. 4) for an extended list of previous psychoanalytical approaches to the text.

⁹⁷ Stevenson is typical of most scholars who note the similar dimensions of the two temples (*Vision of Transformation* 27).

⁹⁸ Cf. R. B. Y. Scott, "The Hebrew Cubit," *JBL* 77 (1958) 207–14 and Block, *Ezekiel* 2 517.

⁹⁹ Zimmerli notes how these particular building materials would change the dimensions even more (*Ezekiel* 2 379).

¹⁰⁰ Robert H. Pfeiffer, *The Books of the Old Testament* (New York: Harper Chapel Books, 1965) 284. Pfeiffer notes that the new temple will be at least a mile south of the old city.

¹⁰¹ The correspondence between Ezekiel's "very high" mountain and that envisioned by Isaiah (2:2) and Micah (4:1) is undeniable. Jerusalem seems to have undergone some seismic activity that has changed its very topographical appearance. The straight and unhindered measurements of Ezekiel's temple allows no room for the topographical realities of Jerusalem both then and now. Jenson also notes this architectural and topographical problem when he states, "the envisioned temple is plotted with an abstract will to perfection that overrides such compromises as any earthly builder, Solomon included, must always make: to the contours of the site, the relation to other buildings, and so on" (*Ezekiel* 303).

one needs only to note how the priests' and prince's portions serve as buffers against the rest of the tribes to appreciate this (cf. Ezek 45:1–7).¹⁰² Indeed, Ezekiel makes it clear that the overall temple complex is devoid of any defilement coming from former royal palaces, corpses, and monuments (Ezek 43:7).¹⁰³ In Ezekiel's temple, the only "king" who will dwell in or near the temple will be YHWH himself. In 43:7 we see that it was in fact the defiling actions of kings from previous generations that helped to bring about the end of the first temple. This should be no surprise in light of verses 10–11. Embedded in these verses is the shaming that the people will experience when they measure the proportions. In undertaking this surveying activity they will be made aware of what Ezekiel is trying to teach them by the dimensional minutiae of the vision. In this vein, Daniel Block correctly notes that the function of the temple vision is to "shame" "Ezekiel's exilic audience for past abuses (43:10)."¹⁰⁴ It is to this topic that we now turn and conclude.

VI. THE SHAMING PRINCIPLE IN EZEKIEL 43:10–11

One final piece of evidence brings poignancy and validity to our discussion thus far, viz. YHWH's command to the people to "measure" (מדד) the temple plan with the intent of "shaming" (בלם) those who study it (cf. also Ezek 7:18; 34:29; 39:26; and 16:59–63).¹⁰⁵ The text reads,¹⁰⁶

10. You, son of man, describe (הגד) to the house of Israel the temple (הבית) in order that they may be ashamed (ויכלמו) of their iniquities; and they shall measure (ומדדו)¹⁰⁷ the proportion (תכנית).¹⁰⁸ 11. And if they are ashamed (נבלמו)¹⁰⁹ of

¹⁰² In this regard, see for example the detailed work of Stevenson, *Vision of Transformation* or Stephen L. Cook and Corrine L. Patton, eds., *Ezekiel's Hierarchical World: Wrestling with a Tiered Reality* (SBLSymS 31; Atlanta: SBL, 2004), e.g. 13–14.

¹⁰³ There is some question as to the interpretation of the phrase פגרי מלכיהם במותם ("corpses of their kings at their deaths") in verse 7. The problem concerns פגרי which can mean corpse or monument/stele. Tuell (as does Block, *Ezekiel* 2 584) suggests that this term refers to some type of monument intended to honor the deceased king (*Ezekiel* 295). Odell posits that these are cult objects of some sort (perhaps associated with child sacrifice) and that this text must be understood in light of Ezekiel 8 and the idolatrous practices recorded there (*Ezekiel* 497–98). She suggests changing the vocalization of *melakīm* to *molkīm*. See also the comments of Joyce, *Ezekiel* 229.

¹⁰⁴ Block, *Ezekiel* 2 511.

¹⁰⁵ For an enlightening treatment of this latter passage, see Odell, "Inversion of Shame" 101–12. And, contra Cooke who posits that the text does not make sense because Israel would not have been told to measure the temple after the angel had already done so (*Ezekiel* 465). However, Cooke, like many of his contemporaries, sought to emend the text as a first, as opposed to a last resort. He has failed to see the didactic importance of the re-measuring of the temple in light of ANE temple construction processes and for purposes of shaming.

¹⁰⁶ Zimmerli is no doubt correct in noting the unity of Ezek 43:1–12 (*Ezekiel* 2 411–12). For suggested sources within this text, see the comments by authors such as Hölscher, Fohrer, Gese, and Bertholet in Zimmerli, *Ezekiel* 2 411.

¹⁰⁷ Contra Cooke who suggests that there is some confusion between מדד and מראה (*Ezekiel* 461). Here מדד appears to be correct in the context of Ezekiel's command to "measure" (מדד) and be ashamed. This term is used 53 times in the OT (36 times in Ezek 40–48) to refer to the "measuring of lengths and distances." Cf. *TWOT* 1:490. When used in the Qal stem it usually denotes "linear, dry, and liquid measurements," cf. Gregory A. Lint, ed., *The OT Hebrew-English Dictionary* (Springfield, MO: World

all which they have done (עשו), make known (הודע) to them the layout (צורת) of the temple (הבית), its arrangement (תכונתו),¹¹⁰ and its exits, and its entrances,¹¹¹ and all its laws (תורותיו),¹¹² and its statutes (חקתיו),¹¹³ and write/draw (וכתב)¹¹⁴ it in their presence in order that they may observe (ישמרו) its entire layout (צורתו) and all its statutes (חקתיו), and do them (ועשו).¹¹⁵

Library Press, 1995) 4:314. With the exception of Isa 40:12, the Qal is also used to refer to “literal distance or quantity.” Lint points up that the Piel stem is normally used by writers to denote more non-literal or metaphorical measurements (4:315). Note also the Akkadian cognate *madādu* with a similar nuance (BDB 551 and *CAD* X/1 [1977] 5–9). While the verb מוד does not appear in Ugaritic texts, the nominal form *mūdūm* designating the occupation of “surveyor” does; cf. Koehler and Baumgartner, 1:547; *NIDOTTE* 2:850–1; and H.-J. Fabry, “מוד,” *TDOT* 8:118–34, here 120. On the understandings of *mudu* in societal life at Ugarit, see further W. Thiel, “Zur gesellschaftlichen Stellung des mudu in Ugarit,” *UF* 12 (1980) 349–56 and P. Vargyas, “Le mudu à Ugarit: Ami du roi?” *UF* 13 (1981) 165–79. It is safe to say that in Ezekiel it should be understood to mean an act of measuring to establish/verify dimensions for a particular purpose.

¹⁰⁸ *TWOT* 2:970 notes “proportion” as one of the two dominant understandings of this word. Leslie Allen opts for “layout” but “proportion” makes the best sense in the context (*Ezekiel 20–48* [WBC 29; Dallas: Word, 1990] 238). The use of the noun תכנית as opposed to the expected תבנית as found in Exod 25:9, 40 and 1 Chr 28:11, 12, 18, 19 is telling of the importance the prophet is placing upon the proportions of the temple. This term is used only by Ezekiel both here and with its alternate meaning of “perfection” in Ezek 28:12. The LXX has τὴν διάταξιν αὐτοῦ (“its arrangement”) which has some of the Hebrew nuance. The Vulgate uses *fabricam* for תכנית.

¹⁰⁹ Block, *Ezekiel* 2 586–87; Zimmerli, *Ezekiel* 2 410; Allen, *Ezekiel 20–48* 243; and Hartmut Gese, *Der Verfassungsentwurf des Ezechiel (Kap. 40–48) traditionsgeschichtlich untersucht* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1957) 40 all suggest emending the MT (i.e. the removal of the conditional clause beginning with וואם) to והם יכלמו (“and they will be ashamed” following the *BHS*). However, this does not necessarily have to be accepted if one considers the full force of what verse 10 implies by the process of measuring the temple. It appears that the natural outcome of the measuring process should bring shame, and *if* it does and they “*get it*,” then the conditional clause makes sense in the context. Namely, the prophet is to teach them more fully about how to observe and learn from this action of measuring the plan.

Also note that while the LXX follows closer to the emended text of the MT, its wording clouds the concept of “shame” in the phrase καὶ αὐτοὶ λήψονται τὴν κόλασιν αὐτῶν (“and they shall bear *in themselves* their punishment”) italics mine representing the middle aspect of the Greek verb). The LXX translators would have been better served to use αἰσχύνομαι, αἰτίωσθαι or ἐντρέπω which all better convey the nuance of the verb “to shame” as can be seen when they are used to translate כלם in 2 Sam 19:4; 1 Chr 19:5; and 2 Chr 30:15 respectively. Surprisingly, the LXX translators use αἰτίωσθαι in Ezek 16:54 and αἰσχύνομαι in Ezek 36:32 to translate כלם but failed to do so here. It appears that they may have used some of these terms interchangeably.

¹¹⁰ LXX omits ותכונתו; so, too, Block, *Ezekiel* 2 587.

¹¹¹ LXX omits ומובאיו but the Codex Alexandrinus included it.

¹¹² I follow the *BHS* and the emendation of צורתו to תורתו for the purpose of clarity, flow, and the redundant use of צורה.

¹¹³ Following the LXX, *BHS*, Allen, *Ezekiel 20–48* 238, 243, Gese, *Verfassungsentwurf* 40–41, Zimmerli, *Ezekiel* 2 411, and many others, I eliminate the phrase וכל־צורתו וכל־תורתו as a scribal error or gloss.

¹¹⁴ I follow Zimmerli, *Ezekiel* 2 419 and suggest that this vision may have been actually *drawn* for the people to observe.

¹¹⁵ I follow the *BHS* rendering. Here the idea of the verb עשה (“to do”) governs the list of nouns preceding it. Note, however, that it is doubtful that the temple was to be “done” (i.e. constructed by them). What this verb best reflects is the idea of “observing” such as is seen throughout the Torah where the people are to “observe” (עשה) YHWH’s laws, statutes, Passover, etc. (e.g. Lev 25:18; Num

YHWH's instruction to Ezekiel to describe (הגיד) the temple plan for the house of Israel, and in particular its proportion (תכנית), finds significance in light of ANE temple-construction protocol. Why would YHWH be so adamant that the people *measure* the proportions? Furthermore, why is the noun צורת ("layout") repeated?¹¹⁶ The answer to these queries is foundational to my thesis that the temple plan, and more importantly, the proportions, had didactic significance.¹¹⁷ This significance is rooted in the action of measuring (מדד) the foundation plan. The "laws" and "statutes" that Ezekiel wants the people to observe is the way in which the new temple *differs* from the Solomonic temple (viz. proportionally)! By "studying" the temple proportions, Ezekiel serves notice to the people that the abominable acts, which they practiced in the very precincts of the Solomonic temple (e.g. Ezekiel 8), will not be repeated in the eschatological temple.¹¹⁸ In other words, Ezekiel is declaring, "do not repeat your old ways, but learn from what you are seeing/measuring!"

Furthermore, the context of Ezekiel's temple vision also sheds light on our discussion. The central theme of 43:7–9 is that the kings' mausoleums and building projects had defiled the temple. YHWH's command to show the plan to the people is telling in this regard—the king's complex is missing. What is more, both the description and the measuring of the plan will further solidify just how different this new temple is. There is no escaping the conclusion to be drawn: Israel will be shamed by their past misdeeds and their diminished role in the construction of Ezekiel's temple.¹¹⁹

VII. CONCLUSIONS

In Ezekiel's temple vision, the implications present concerning the notation on the shaming of the people when they measure (מדד) the plan is directly connected to their role in defiling the first temple by their spiritual harlotry. Israel had indeed brought shame upon themselves by their wanton practices of spiritual adultery (cf. Ezek 16:59–63; 20:43–44; 36:31–32; 39:26; 43:10–11; 44:9–14) and in doing so had brought dishonor upon YHWH in the eyes of the nations (cf. Ezek 20:9, 14, 22, 39; 36:20, 21, 23; 39:7; 43:7, 8).¹²⁰ It is therefore not surprising that YHWH

9:2, 3, 4, 6, 10, 11, 12, 13; 15:22; Deut 6:24, 25; 15:5; etc.) or "celebrate" the Sabbath (e.g. Exod 31:16; Deut 5:15, 31, 32).

¹¹⁶ The *BHS* preserves a text tradition whereby the noun appears no less than four times. While I have eliminated or emended two of these occurrences, one could argue that these may have been purposeful to the prophet's intent. Nevertheless, even without these, the wording still supports my thesis.

¹¹⁷ Zimmerli notes that the new temple is a "call to depart from what was once sinful and evil and displeasing to God" (*Ezekiel* 2 361).

¹¹⁸ Zimmerli, *Ezekiel* 2 362. So too Fabry, "מדד," 8:125. See also Zech 2:5–6 and the angel's measurement of Jerusalem.

¹¹⁹ Cf. Tuell, *Law of the Temple in Ezekiel* 40–48.

¹²⁰ Ezekiel uses terms such as חלל ("to profane"), קנא ("to be jealous of"), and טמא ("to defile") in relation to Israel's misuse of YHWH's holy name. By doing this they were shaming YHWH personally. Note also Jeremiah's use of בוש in a similar context of covenant infidelity whereby Israel fails to feel shame (cf. Jer 2:26; 6:15). For a full listing of verbal and nominal forms for shame in the HB, see

acts on behalf of his own name (Ezekiel 20; 36) to restore his place of honor before the nations (Ezekiel 39) and Israel (Ezekiel 40–42) through the return of his honor/glory (כבוד) to the completed temple he constructs.¹²¹ When Israel is made aware of this through the absence of human involvement, which was so common in ANE temple-building protocol and through measuring the layout of the new temple, they will quickly recognize the stark differences between the former temple, which they had defiled, and the new temple, which they had no part in erecting. The message is clear: Israel has not only lost honor, but there will be no continuity in “worship.”¹²²

Under the renewed covenant, YHWH’s honor is thus restored but Israel’s is lowered—a fitting position for a nation once guilty of defiling the house of the living God.¹²³ In this vein, Robert Jenson perhaps comes closest to the reality and purpose of Ezekiel’s temple vision when he notes that “the plan of Ezekiel’s eschatological temple is at once a rebuke of the old earthly temple and its fulfillment.”¹²⁴ YHWH is indeed pictured as holding the place of honor in the eschatological temple whereas Israel is reduced to a secondary status. In the past building projects of the tabernacle and Solomon’s temple the people had shared in the honor of these structures by donating materials and expertise in their construction (Exodus 25; 35; 36; 1 Chronicles 29). Not so in the eschatological temple; the only honor present is YHWH’s.¹²⁵ Israel stands forgiven, yes, but in the afterglow of that forgiveness they will also be ashamed of their role in bringing about the demise of the first temple. They now know exactly who their God is and what he requires of them.¹²⁶ Eric Ortland concludes well that “YHWH cannot be truly known without permanent remembrance of the sin and death from which the community was saved and the utter graciousness of YHWH’s salvation.”¹²⁷

Bechtel, “Shame as a Sanction” 54. Note a similar listing with Akkadian roots in Olyan, “Honor, Shame” 203–4, n. 6.

¹²¹ So too Bennett, “Ezekiel’s Geometric Vision” 433.

¹²² Odell rightly concludes her article on Ezek 16:59–63 by noting that YHWH had not caused the shaming of Israel; Israel had brought it upon itself. YHWH had remained loyal to the covenant whereas Israel had neglected it continuously (“Inversion of Shame and Forgiveness” 111–12). To a certain degree, the same conclusion holds true for the shaming experienced by Israel in the temple vision. It is rooted in their inadequate treatment of the holiness of YHWH and his temple.

¹²³ Olyan notes that “[i]t is the suzerain’s right to reassign a vassal to another place in the status hierarchy, and there is little or nothing the vassal can do about it” (“Honor, Shame” 207). Olyan goes on to note that when a suzerain diminishes a vassal’s honor, the suzerain is not guilty of a covenant infraction. However if the opposite occurs, the vassal has indeed broken covenant by these actions as is indicated throughout Ezekiel.

¹²⁴ Jenson, *Ezekiel* 303; cf. 308. See notes on shame and honor in Ortland, “Shame in Restoration in Ezekiel” 2–4. Ortland is correct in pointing up the role of shame in bringing recognition of who YHWH is before the people, but he fails to draw the connection to the immediate context of the measuring of the temple plan.

¹²⁵ So, too, Bennett, “Ezekiel’s Geometric Vision” 432.

¹²⁶ Contra Bennett who calls this the “shame of self-awareness” not shame related to their former sins (“Ezekiel’s Geometric Vision” 431). The recollection of what they had done is indeed the focus here.

¹²⁷ Ortland, “Shame in Restoration in Ezekiel” 16.

What is most interesting is that even in the midst of the restoration oracles of chapters 34–48 Ezekiel is using this prominent ANE paradigm as a final, subtle, indictment of the nation for their incessant idolatrous practices, which led to the corruption of the first temple beyond preservation. Indeed, we can learn just as much from what Ezekiel does not say/write concerning the construction of the temple as we do from what he records. Some may contend that this is an “argument from silence” and therefore lacks veracity. Yet when one looks at Ezekiel’s overall methodology of using sign acts, visions, imagery, and ANE motifs to deliver his message, it is much easier to concede the fact that the prophet was not above using non-verbal methods of communicating his message to the people (e.g. 24:16–24). Indeed, as with the sign acts, many of these indirect approaches allowed for an even stronger message than a straightforward oracle of doom. Therefore, understanding the prophet’s overall presentation from his ANE context of temple-building protocols and shame/honor principles enables the reader to gain a clearer picture of what Ezekiel is implying by this closing vision of the temple and why he insists that the people measure the temple plan and its proportions.¹²⁸

¹²⁸ I am indebted to Mark Boda, Margaret Odell, and Rickie Moore for reading earlier drafts of this paper and offering valuable critiques.