

EZEKIEL

Hard to Heart

“The Word ‘Bible’ Isn’t in the Bible”

43:6-27

Sooner or later someone is going to tell you that the word “Trinity” is not found in the Bible.

That’s correct. A lot of words aren’t found in the Bible. For example, **the word "bible" is not found in the Bible**, but we use it anyway to describe the Bible. Next time someone tells you that “Trinity” is not found in the Bible, tell them they are using a word to describe the Bible that isn’t found in the Bible!!!

Likewise, "omniscience" which means *all-knowing*, "omnipotence" which means *all-powerful*, and "omnipresence" which means *present everywhere*, are words not found in the Bible either, but we use them to describe the attributes of God. We don't have to see a specific word in the Bible in order for the concept it describes to be true.

God must reveal Himself to us if He is to be known. He reveals Himself to us as one God existing in three co-equal and co-eternal Persons - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. They are not three separate ‘gods.’ One God; three Persons.

Here are a sampling of verses where God reveals Himself in the Bible as a Trinity.

Matthew 28:19 Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

2 Corinthians 13:14 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen.

Jude 1:20 But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit,

Jude 1:21 keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.

At the baptism of Jesus the Father spoke from Heaven while the Spirit descended upon the Lord in the form of a dove.

There have been many attempts to develop illustrations of the Trinity. However, none of the popular illustrations are completely accurate. They all fall short because we are talking about something that is incomprehensible to our human, finite minds.

The closest I can come is not really an illustration but it is helpful. A human being is one person, but you are a trichotomy of body, soul and spirit. Don't try to develop that any farther. It simply shows that the idea of a Trinity or a tri-unity is not far-fetched.

We see an example of the Trinity in verse six of Ezekiel forty-three.

Ezekiel 43:6 Then I heard Him speaking to me from the temple, while a man stood beside me.

We've established in previous studies that the "man" standing beside Ezekiel, his guide on this Temple tour, was none other than Jesus Christ in a preincarnation appearance. Ezekiel was being carried along by the Holy Spirit. Now he was spoken to by God the Father.

John Gill put it like this:

[The man] whom he saw at first with a measuring line in his hand... and with whom he had been all along, and had seen him measure the house, and all belonging to it: he stood by him as the Mediator between God and him; as the medium of communion with him; as the advocate with the Father: he stood by him to interpret what was said to him; to guide him further into the knowledge of divine things; to assist him, protect and

defend him, to continue him in fellowship with God, and to preserve him in grace to glory. Here is an appearance of the three Persons in the Godhead; the Father speaking to the prophet out of the house; the Son in human form standing by him; and the Spirit of the Lord, who had took him up from the ground, and had brought him into the inner court.

The “man,” the Lord Jesus Christ in an Old Testament appearance, thus takes a position like that of a mediator, giving Ezekiel a prophetic glimpse of the first coming of Jesus as a man to save us by dying on the Cross. It was sort of a vision within the vision to encourage Ezekiel.

The Father spoke to Ezekiel.

Ezekiel 43:7 And He said to me, "Son of man, this is the place of My throne and the place of the soles of My feet, where I will dwell in the midst of the children of Israel forever. No more shall the house of Israel defile My holy name, they nor their kings, by their harlotry or with the carcasses of their kings on their high places.

Ezekiel 43:8 When they set their threshold by My threshold, and their doorpost by My doorpost, with a wall between them and Me, they defiled My holy name by the abominations which they committed; therefore I have consumed them in My anger.

Ezekiel 43:9 Now let them put their harlotry and the carcasses of their kings far away from Me, and I will dwell in their midst forever.

The Israelites set up idols in the Temple. Their kings had defiled God’s holy place. On account of idolatry God had sent His people into captivity. His glory had departed from them. Even after they returned and rebuilt the Temple, God’s glory did not return. It was a long season of discipline, continuing even today.

The reference to “the carcasses of the kings” has to do with the fact that some fourteen kings of Judah were buried in sepulchers near the Temple. Death, which came through man’s sin, defiled the Temple site. They had themselves buried there to speak of their glory but it robbed God of His holiness.

Here’s a thought. If idolatry is so extensive, so pervasive, that it has taken God more than 2500 years of discipline to root it out of His people, can we take it lightly? If God identifies someone or some thing in my life that is an

idol then I ought to expect it to be extensive, pervasive. I'd better defend against it coming back and once again usurping the place God occupies in my heart.

Another thing we see in these verses is that God desires to dwell among us. Not that God needed anything, or was lacking in fellowship, but the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit determined to create mankind in order to enjoy fellowship with us.

That fellowship didn't last too long, in the Garden of Eden, before our parents failed the one test of their love for God. Everything that God has done from that moment about seven thousand years ago until today has been an unfolding drama of redemption to bring us back into fellowship with God.

I use that phrase a lot, 'the unfolding drama of redemption.' It's actually the title of a marvelous book by W. Graham Scroggie. He surveys the entire Bible to show God's plan of redemption unfolding.

Here are a couple of choice quotes:

Jesus' human pedigree, His redemptive program, and His divine purpose which are revealed in the New Testament historically are revealed in the Old Testament prophetically, not in any general or doubtful manner, but in great and exact detail.

Man the sinner needs someone who will redemptively represent him; he needs someone who will reveal God to him; and he needs someone who, with authority and effect, will rule over him. In other words, man needs a priest, a prophet, and a king: a priest to represent him before God; a prophet to reveal God to him; and a king to take control of, and to rule in and over the whole kingdom of his life. In vain will man find such an one among his fallen fellows, but in Christ the need is supplied in every respect.

It's a great read!

We next read that Ezekiel's description of the Temple could have a powerful effect on the exiles.

Ezekiel 43:10 "Son of man, describe the temple to the house of Israel, that they may be ashamed of their iniquities; and let them measure the pattern.

Ezekiel 43:11 And if they are ashamed of all that they have done, make known to them the design of the temple and its arrangement, its exits and its entrances, its entire design and all its ordinances, all its forms and all its laws. Write it down in their sight, so that they may keep its whole design and all its ordinances, and perform them.

Ezekiel 43:12 This is the law of the temple: The whole area surrounding the mountaintop is most holy. Behold, this is the law of the temple.

A clear presentation of the future Temple to the exiles in Babylon would explain to them the necessity for God's discipline. They would see how they had offended the holiness of God and what was required to restore the fellowship that had been broken by their sin. They would also gain strength from the hope that there would indeed be another Temple on the earth that would be filled with the glory of God and from which God Himself would rule over both them and the earth.

The phrase "the law of the Temple" seems to mean "this is the purpose of the Temple," that is, to reveal sin and repair the breach between man and God.

There is power in just the reading of God's Word. It can render you ashamed for sin, of course, as the Holy Spirit convicts you. It can fill you with the wonder of God's grace, mercy, and forgiveness.

When the Millennial Temple is established and God is enthroned in it daily services will begin. Ezekiel was given a description of the altar and procedures for consecrating it.

Ezekiel 43:13 "These are the measurements of the altar in cubits (the cubit is one cubit and a handbreadth): the base one cubit high and one cubit wide, with a rim all around its edge of one span. This is the height of the altar:

Ezekiel 43:14 from the base on the ground to the lower ledge, two cubits; the width of the ledge, one cubit; from the smaller ledge to the larger ledge, four cubits; and the width of the ledge, one cubit.

Ezekiel 43:15 The altar hearth is four cubits high, with four horns extending upward from the hearth.

Ezekiel 43:16 The altar hearth is twelve cubits long, twelve wide, square at its four corners;

Ezekiel 43:17 the ledge, fourteen cubits long and fourteen wide on its four sides, with a rim of half a cubit around it; its base, one cubit all around; and its steps face toward the east."

The height of the altar will be 19 feet but part of this is below ground. The altar hearth, 21 feet square, was reached by a flight of steps facing east. The sacrificial Altar will be approached from the East. Previous altars were all approached from the South. Now there will be stairs to the altar, not a ramp as previously. The top of the altar is now described by the Hebrew word "ariel" meaning *hearth of God* or *lion of God*.

Differences in the build of these items, like the altar, continue to establish that this is a real, future Temple that has yet to be built. This is *not* symbolic or allegorical in any way. It is literal.

Once the altar is built and in place it will be consecrated for seven days with a series of offerings.

Ezekiel 43:18 And He said to me, "Son of man, thus says the Lord God: 'These are the ordinances for the altar on the day when it is made, for sacrificing burnt offerings on it, and for sprinkling blood on it.

Ezekiel 43:19 You shall give a young bull for a sin offering to the priests, the Levites, who are of the seed of Zadok, who approach Me to minister to Me,' says the Lord God.

Ezekiel 43:20 You shall take some of its blood and put it on the four horns of the altar, on the four corners of the ledge, and on the rim around it; thus you shall cleanse it and make atonement for it.

Ezekiel 43:21 Then you shall also take the bull of the sin offering, and burn it in the appointed place of the temple, outside the sanctuary.

Ezekiel 43:22 On the second day you shall offer a kid of the goats without blemish for a sin offering; and they shall cleanse the altar, as they cleansed it with the bull.

Ezekiel 43:23 When you have finished cleansing it, you shall offer a young bull without blemish, and a ram from the flock without blemish.

Ezekiel 43:24 When you offer them before the Lord, the priests shall throw salt on them, and they will offer them up as a burnt offering to the Lord.

Ezekiel 43:25 Every day for seven days you shall prepare a goat for a sin offering; they shall also prepare a young bull and a ram from the flock, both without blemish.

Ezekiel 43:26 Seven days they shall make atonement for the altar and purify it, and so consecrate it.

Ezekiel 43:27 When these days are over it shall be, on the eighth day and thereafter, that the priests shall offer your burnt offerings and your peace offerings on the altar; and I will accept you,' says the Lord God."

We've mentioned before, and we will see again, that the priests of the Millennial Temple will be Levites of the family of Zadok. This has to do with a promise made to them for their loyalty to David and Solomon.

After seven days of offering bulls, goats, and rams the priests will present the people's burnt offerings and fellowship offerings on the altar. This process will mark the full resumption of God's fellowship with His people, as then God will accept them. These sacrifices will point Israelites to Christ who will have given them access to the Father.

Yes, there will be animal sacrifices in the Millennium. They do not save anyone and so they do not take anything away from the final, once-for-all sacrifice of Jesus on the Cross. They show the separation between God and man and how it must be breached - by accepting Christ's sacrifice.

God expected the description of the future Temple to affect the exiles. To profoundly affect them.

Jerry Bridges was a Foursquare pastor who wrote something I read some years ago. I remember him telling of a time he felt led to simply get up on a series of Sunday mornings and just read aloud the Book of the Revelation of Jesus Christ with no commentary. He spoke of it having a powerful effect on the congregants.

Would to God that with or without commentary we would be challenged and changed at every reading of God's Word!