

CHAPTER 42

This chapter continues and concludes the describing and measuring of this mystical temple, which it is very hard to understand the particular architecture of, and yet more hard to comprehend the mystical meaning of. Here is,

- I. A description of the chambers that were about the courts, their situation and structure (v. 1-13), and the uses for which they were designed (v. 13, 14).
- II. A survey of the whole compass of ground which was taken up with the house, and the courts belonging to it (v. 15-20).

EZEKIEL 42:1-14

THE VISION OF THE TEMPLE

The prophet has taken a very exact view of the temple and the buildings belonging to it, and is now brought again into the outer court, to observe the chambers that were in that square.

I. Here is a description of these chambers, which (as that which went before) seems to us very perplexed and intricate, through our unacquaintedness with the Hebrew language and the rules of architecture at that time. We shall only observe, in general,

1. That about the temple, which was the place of public worship, there were private chambers, to teach us that our attendance upon God in solemn ordinances will not excuse us from the duties of the closet. We must not only worship in the courts of God's house, but must, both before and after our attendance there, enter into our chambers, enter into our closets, and read and meditate, and *pray to our Father in secret*; and a great deal of comfort the people of God have found in their communion with God in solitude.

2. That these chambers were many; there were *three stories* of them, and, though the higher stories were not so large as the lower, yet they served as well for retirement, v. 5, 6. There were many, that there might be

conveniences for all such devout people as Anna the prophetess, who *departed not from the temple night or day*, ~~<4ES>~~ Luke 2:37. *In my Father's house are many mansions*. In his house on earth there are so; multitudes by faith have taken lodgings in his sanctuary, and *yet there is room*.

3. That these chambers, though they were private, yet were near the temple, within view of it, within reach of it, to teach us to prefer public worship before private (*the Lord loves the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob*, and so must we), and to refer our private worship to the public. Our religious performances in our chambers must be to prepare us for the exercises of devotion in public, and to further us in our improvement of them, as our opportunities are.

4. That before these chambers there were *walks of five yards broad* (v. 4), in which those that had lodgings in these chambers might meet for conversation, might walk and talk together for their mutual edification, might communicate their knowledge and experiences. For we are not to spend all our time between the church and the chamber, though a great deal of time may be spent to very good purpose in both. But man is made for society, and Christians for the communion of saints; and the duties of that communion we must make conscience of, and the privileges and pleasures of that communion we must take the comfort of. It is promised to Joshua, who was high priest in the second temple, that God will *give him places to walk in among those that stand by*, ~~<3XX>~~ Zechariah 3:7.

II. Here is the use of these chambers appointed, v. 13, 14.

1. They were *for the priests* that approach unto the Lord, that they may be always near their business and may not be non-residents. *Therefore* they are called *holy chambers*, because they were for use of those that ministered in holy things during their ministration. Those that have public work to do for God and the souls of men have need to be much in private, to fit themselves for it. Ministers should spend much time in their chambers, in reading, meditation, and prayer, that their *profiting may appear*; and they ought to be provided with conveniences for this purpose.

2. There the priests were to deposit *the most holy things*, those parts of the offerings which fell to their share; and there they were to *eat them*, they and their families, in a religious manner, for *the place is holy*; and thus they must make a difference between those feasts upon the sacrifice and other meals.

3. There (among other uses) they were to lay their vestments, which God had appointed them to wear when they ministered at the altar, their linen ephods, coats, girdles, and bonnets. We read of the providing of priests garments after their return out of captivity, ^{<4170>}Nehemiah 7:70, 72. When they had ended their service at the altar they must lay by those garments, to signify that the use of them should continue only during that dispensation; but they must *put on other garments*, such as other people wear, when they *approached to those things which were for the people*, that is, to do that part of their service which related to the people, to teach them the law and to answer their enquiries. Their holy garments must be *laid up*, that they may be kept clean and decent for the credit of their service.

^{<4015>}EZEKIEL 42:15-20

THE VISION OF THE TEMPLE

We have attended the measuring of this mystical temple and are now to see how far the holy ground on which we tread extends; and that also is here measured, and found to take in a great compass. Observe,

1. What the dimensions of it were. It extended each way 500 reeds (v. 16-19), each reed above three yards and a half, so that it reached every way about an English measured mile, which, the ground lying square, was above four miles round. Thus large were the suburbs (as I may call them) of this mystical temple, signifying the great extent of the church in gospel-times, when all nations should be discipled and the kingdoms of the world made Christ's kingdoms. Room should be made in God's courts for the numerous forces of the Gentiles that shall flow into them, as was foretold, ^{<3408>}Isaiah 49:18; 60:4. It is in part fulfilled already in the accession of the Gentiles to the church; and we trust it shall have a more full accomplishment when the *fulness of the Gentiles shall come in and all Israel shall be saved*.

2. Why the dimensions of it were made thus large. It was to *make a separation*, by putting a very large distance *between the sanctuary and the profane place*; and *therefore* there was a wall surrounding it, to keep off those that were unclean and to separate between the *previous and the vile*. Note, A difference is to be put between common and sacred things,

between God's name and other names, between his day and other days, his book and other books, his institutions and other observances; and a distance is to be put between our worldly and religious actions, so as still to go about the worship of God with a solemn pause.