

Ezekiel, master of metaphors and mystical visions, preached to his fellow exiles in Babylon (early sixth century B.C.E.). He had been a priest in the Jerusalem Temple before it was destroyed. The account of this vision, dated to 572 B.C.E., surely heartened those who read it, as its very detail strengthened their hope to return to their homeland.

The sidrah concludes with a description for building an incense altar in the tabernacle. Similarly, the haftarah details Ezekiel's vision of a future sanctuary to be built after the exile, including an altar to be placed in the new Temple.

43:10] Now you, mortal, describe the Temple to the House of Israel. Let them measure its design. And let them be ashamed of their iniquities. 11] And when they are ashamed of what they have done, show them the plan of the Temple: its arrangement, its exits and entrances, and all its rules and regulations. Write it down in their sight, so that they can follow and keep its entire plan and its rules.

12] This is the law of the Temple: the whole area on top of the mountain, all around it, is most holy. Such is the law of the Temple.

13] Here are the dimensions of the altar, in [long] cubits—whose length is a [regular] cubit and a handbreadth. Its foundation shall be one cubit deep and a cubit wide, with a border around the edge measuring a span in width. This is the height of the altar: 14] From the foundation on the ground to the lower ledge, two cubits, with a width of one

43:10] *The Temple.* The Hebrew has simply הַבַּיִת (*ha-bayit*), literally, "the house" or "the dwelling."

Let them be ashamed. The exquisite nature of the design will awaken in the viewers a sense of guilt that they had forfeited so beautiful a structure through their past sins, which brought about the Temple's destruction.

11] *Show them the plan.* Which was divinely revealed, as was the sanctuary that Moses erected.

13] *Here are the dimensions.* They are, however, no longer clear, perhaps because the text became cor-

rupted in the process of copying it over the centuries. Many interpreters have tried to visualize what Ezekiel had in mind, without agreement.

[Long] cubits. Roughly 20½ inches (52 cm).

14] *Foundation on the ground.* Literally, "bosom of the earth." Ezekiel's expression reflects the idiom of his environment, which often referred to temples in such fashion. A metaphor: the altar's depth goes to the bosom of the earth, while its top—the hearth, where the fire burnt—represents the heavens and is called *har-el*, mountain of God (v. 15). Ezekiel seems

HAFTARAH for T'tzaveh

תְּצַוֶּה

Ezekiel

43 : 10 - 27

Part 1

מִגַּ 10 אַתָּה בְּנֵי־אָדָם הַגֵּד אֶת־בַּיִת־יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת־הַבַּיִת וְיִכְלְמוּ מַעֲוֹנוֹתֵיהֶם וּמִדְּבָרוֹ אֶת־תְּכַנְיֹתָם: 11 וְאִם־יִכְלְמוּ מִכָּל אֲשֶׁר־עָשׂוּ צוֹרַת הַבַּיִת וּתְכוּנֹתָו וּמוֹצְאָיו וּמוֹבְאָיו וּכְל־צוּרֹתָו וְאֵת כָּל־חֻקֹּתָיו וְכָל־צוּרֹתָו וְכָל־תּוֹרֹתָו הַזֶּה אֹתָם וְכָתַב לְעֵינֵיהֶם וְיִשְׁמְרוּ אֶת־כָּל־צוּרֹתָו וְאֶת־כָּל־חֻקֹּתָיו וְעָשׂוּ אֹתָם: 12 זֹאת תּוֹרַת הַבַּיִת עַל־רֹאשׁ הָהָר כָּל־גְּבֻלוֹ סָבִיב סָבִיב קֹדֶשׁ קֹדְשִׁים הַנְּהַיִתָּה זֹאת תּוֹרַת הַבַּיִת:

13 וְאֵלֶּה מִדּוֹת הַמִּזְבֵּחַ בְּאַמּוֹת אַמָּה אַמָּה וְטַפַּח וְחִיק הָאֵמָה וְאַמָּה־רֹחַב וּגְבוּלָהּ אֶל־שִׁפְתָהּ סָבִיב זֶרֶת הָאֲחֹד וְזֶה גֹב הַמִּזְבֵּחַ: 14 וּמִחִיק הָאָרֶץ עַד־הַעֲזוּבָה הַתְּחִתּוֹנָה שְׁתַּיִם אַמּוֹת וְרֹחַב אַמָּה אֶחָד

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Ezekiel 43:15-24

cubit; from the smaller to the larger ledge, four cubits, with a width of one cubit. 15] The hearth shall be four cubits; and four horns are to rise up from the hearth. 16] The hearth shall be twelve cubits long and twelve cubits wide, squared in its four equal sides. 17] The ledge shall be a square of fourteen cubits by fourteen, with four equal sides, with a surrounding border of a half-cubit, and the surrounding base one cubit. Its ramp shall face the east.

18] Then [God] said to me: Mortal, thus says the Eternal God: These are the rules for the altar, on the day it is built for offering whole burnt offerings and for sprinkling blood on it. 19] To the levitical priests who are descended from Zadok and therefore draw near to serve Me, says the Eternal God, give a young bull of the herd for a purgation offering. 20] Take some of its blood and put it on the four horns of the altar, the four corners of the ledge, and the surrounding border; thus shall you purify it and wipe it clean. 21] Then take the bull of the purgation offering and burn it in the appointed place in the Temple, outside the sanctuary.

22] On the next day, you shall offer a goat without blemish as a purgation offering, purifying the altar from sin as you purified it with the bull. 23] When you are done with the purification, offer a young bull of the herd and a ram from the flock, both without blemish. 24] Offer them to the Eternal. Let the priests throw salt on them, and sacrifice them as a whole burnt offering to the Eternal.

to have seen the ideal altar as a miniature ziggurat (the old Mesopotamian temple structure). The Temple itself is a miniature of what later would be called "the universe."

15] *Hearth.* Where the fire was built. The verse has two terms for it. The first is *הר אל* (*har-el*, mountain of God). The second term has been transmitted in two variant spellings; the text "as read" (*k'rei*) understands it as *אריאל* (*ari-el*, lion of God).

16] *Four horns.* As prescribed for the Tabernacle

ומהעזרה הקטנה עד העזרה הגדולה ארבע אמות ורחב האמה: [15] וההר אל ארבע אמות ומהאריאל ומהאריאל ולמעלה הקרנות ארבע: 16 והאריאל והאריאל שתיים עשרה ארך בשתיים עשרה רחב רבוע אל ארבעת רבעיו: 17 והעזרה ארבע עשרה ארך בשתיים עשרה רחב אל ארבעת רבעיה והגבול סביב אותה חצי האמה והחיקלה אמה סביב ומעלתהו פנות קדים: 18 ויאמר אלי בן אדם כה אמר אדני יהוה אלהים אלה המזבח ביום העשותו להעלות עליו עולה ולזרק עליו דם: 19 ונתתה אל הפהנים הלויים אשר הם מזרע צדוק הקרבים אלי נאם אדני יהוה אלהים לשרתני פר בן בקר לחטאת: 20 ולקחת מדמו ונתתה על ארבע קרנותיו ואל ארבע פנות העזרה ואל הגבול סביב וחסאת אותו וכפרתהו: 21 ולקחת את הפר החטאת ושרפו במפקד הבית מהוץ למקדש: 22 וביום השני תקריב שעיה עזים תמים לחטאת וחסאת את המזבח כאשר חטאתו בפר: 23 בכלותך מחטא תקריב פר בן בקר תמים ואיל מן הצאן תמים: 24 והקרבתם לפני יהוה והשליכו הפהנים עליהם מלח והעלו אותם עלה ליהוה:

altar (Exod. 27:2; see comment there). The altar's corner horns represent strength, like a bull's horns. 17] *Ramp.* Compare Exodus 20:23, where building an altar with steps is prohibited.

23] *Without blemish.* Only the best was to be offered; it was to be a "sacrifice," giving up something that had value.

24] *Whole burnt offering.* An *עלה* (*olah*) required total burning of the animal (except for the skin), and nothing was to be eaten of it.