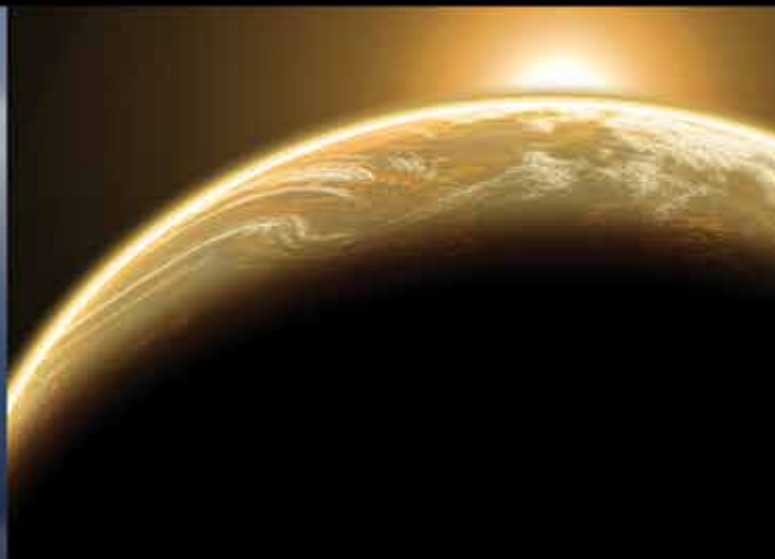


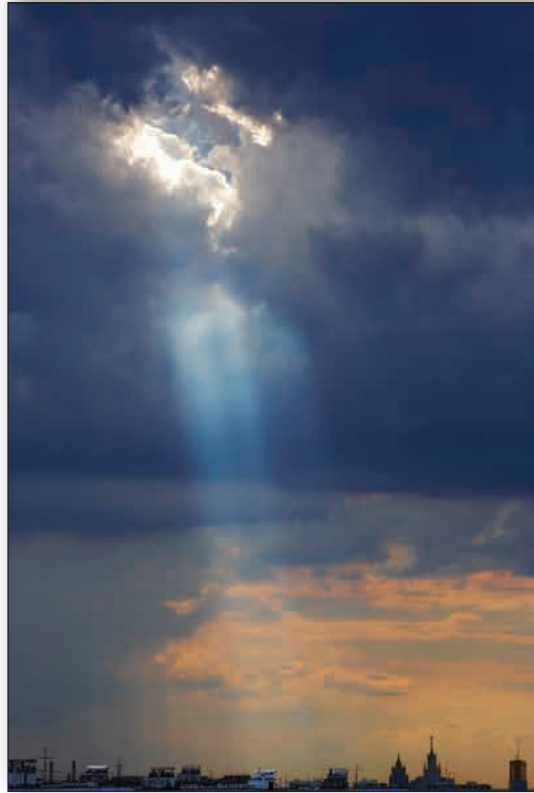
ROSE GUIDE TO

END-TIMES PROPHECY



FOUR VIEWS OF THE END TIMES

	Amillennialism	Postmillennialism	Dispensational Premillennialism	Historical Premillennialism
Will Jesus return physically?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
When will Jesus return?	Anytime; a detailed time frame is not important.	After the millennium.	After a 7-year tribulation; before the millennium.	After tribulation; before the millennium.
Do the rapture and second coming of Christ occur at the same time?	Yes	Yes	No, they are events separated by either 7 years (pre-tribulation rapture) or 3½ years (mid-tribulation rapture).	Yes
Will there be a great tribulation?	The tribulation occurs any time Christians are persecuted or wars and disasters occur.	Tribulation is either the first-century Jewish-Roman War or the ongoing conflict between good and evil prior to millennium.	Yes	Yes
Will Christians suffer during the tribulation?	Yes, Christians will suffer and endure persecution until Jesus returns; persecution will increase in the end.	Yes, Christians are called to share the gospel, and tribulation will occur when that gospel is opposed.	Christians are either raptured before the tribulation (pre-tribulation rapture) or 3½ years into the tribulation (mid-tribulation rapture).	Yes, Christians will go through the tribulation and endure suffering and persecution for the cause of Christ.
Will there be a literal 1,000-year millennium?	No, the millennium refers to the reign of Christ in the hearts of his believers.	No, the millennium refers to a period of peace when the gospel reaches all people.	Yes, after the 7-year tribulation, Christ will return and reign for 1,000 years.	Yes, after the tribulation, Christ will return and reign for 1,000 years.
Who is saved?	Christians only	Christians only	Christians only	Christians only
Is the modern state of Israel relevant to the prophecies in Revelation?	No	No	Yes	No
When was this view most held?	Well-known by the AD 300s. It became widespread throughout the AD 400s. Continues to be accepted today.	May have been popular in the AD 300s and 400s, perhaps earlier. Less popular today.	Became popular in the 1800s. Has increased in popularity.	The earliest view of the end times, emerging at the end of the first century.



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WHAT ABOUT THE TEMPLE?

The question that many people have asked in the centuries since the fall of the second temple has been, “*Will a temple ever be built again?*”

The answer to this question is, “Yes!” The prophet Ezekiel clearly predicted and described a new temple (Ezekiel 40–43). Other prophets seem to suggest the same: Micah and Isaiah saw a day when people from all nations will come to “the house of the God of Jacob” (Isaiah 2:2–4; Micah 4:1–3), and Zechariah suggested that the Messiah himself would build this temple (Zechariah 6:12–13).

But the prophets’ predictions raise a further question:

“What *kind* of temple were they describing?”

- Were the prophets predicting a physical temple that will be built before the end of time?

- Or were they describing a spiritual temple?
- Could they even have been using picturesque language to describe the future people of God?

On these points, Bible-believing Christians throughout the ages have disagreed.

A Future Physical Structure

Ezekiel's description of the coming temple is highly detailed—all the way down to the dimensions of hooks and hewn stones (Ezekiel 40:42–43). All this exquisite detail has convinced many biblical scholars that Ezekiel glimpsed an actual, future structure. Many believe that this yet-to-be-constructed temple will stand as a center of Jewish worship during the thousand-year reign of Jesus on earth.

But what about the animal sacrifices that Ezekiel predicted for this temple? (Ezekiel 43:18–27). Will such bloody offerings really take place during the thousand-year reign? Some say yes, and suggest that these future sacrifices will commemorate the atoning sacrifice of Jesus.

Others are not so sure. They wonder how such sacrifices could possibly take place while Jesus, the risen sacrifice, reigns over his people. After all, didn't the death of Jesus mark the end of all sin offerings (Hebrews 10:11–14)? Wouldn't any return to animal offerings represent a redemptive U-turn, back to the Old Testament sacrificial system?⁷⁰ Such a system—even if the sacrifices were commemorative—would repudiate the sufficiency of Jesus' death on the cross. If that's the case, perhaps the sacrifices in the prophet's vision are figurative pictures of how God's people will worship in the future kingdom, couched in terms that would have made sense to Ezekiel's first readers.

A Present and Future Spiritual Reality

Still other biblical scholars suggest that what Ezekiel saw symbolized something far greater than any physical structure.

- Perhaps Ezekiel glimpsed the ideal temple of God in the heavens (Revelation 7:15; 11:19; 14:15–17; 16:1, 17); if so, it is possible that the sacrifices signify pure worship in the presence of God.

- This temple might point to the presence of God within the future New Jerusalem (Revelation 21:2, 22).
- Or perhaps Ezekiel's temple pointed forward to the church. After all, didn't the apostle Paul refer to Christians as "the temple of God"? (1 Corinthians 3:16–17; 6:19; 2 Corinthians 6:16). Jesus is the "cornerstone" of this temple (Ephesians 2:20–21). Perhaps Ezekiel's temple signified the future people of God, and the sacrifices symbolized Christians' sacrifices of obedience and praise in response to Christ's one sacrifice (Romans 12:1; Hebrews 13:15; 1 Peter 2:5). If that's the case, there is no need for a future, physical temple. The temple is the people of God, the men and women from every nation who have trusted Jesus and who now are "being built together into a dwelling place for God" (Ephesians 2:22).

A MILLENNIAL TEMPLE?

Dispensational premillennialists as well as many historical premillennialists expect a temple to be built by Jesus himself during his millennial reign; this temple will fulfill the prophecies in Ezekiel 40–43.

The challenge is whether such a spiritual fulfillment really reflects what Ezekiel prophesied. The prophet saw a temple, not a group of people. If God fulfills this vision by dwelling among people, wouldn't that mean that God went back on his promises?



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Not necessarily!

Think of it this way: Suppose a father in 1900 promised to give his young son a horse and buggy whenever his son married. During the son's later childhood and adolescence, this young man might have dreamt about the precise contours of the buggy and the breed of his horse. This was truly a good promise from his father! Now, suppose that, when the son married in the 1920, the father did not give him a horse and buggy. Instead, the son and his bride received a brand-new automobile with leather seats, nickel-plated headlights, and battery ignition.

Did the father break his promise to his son?

Of course not. "The essence of the father's word has remained the same: a convenient mode of transportation. What has changed is the precise form of transportation."⁷¹ In the 1920s, new circumstances made the gift of a car far more

A TRIBULATION TEMPLE?

Some dispensational premillennialists expect a temple to be built during the great tribulation; the Antichrist will defile this temple (Daniel 9:27; Matthew 24:15; 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4; Revelation 11:1-2). Others understand Daniel 9:27 to refer to the defiling of the second temple in 167 BC or to the Roman destruction of the temple in AD 70. Matthew 24:15 and Revelation 11:1-2 might also refer to the fall of the second temple in AD 70.



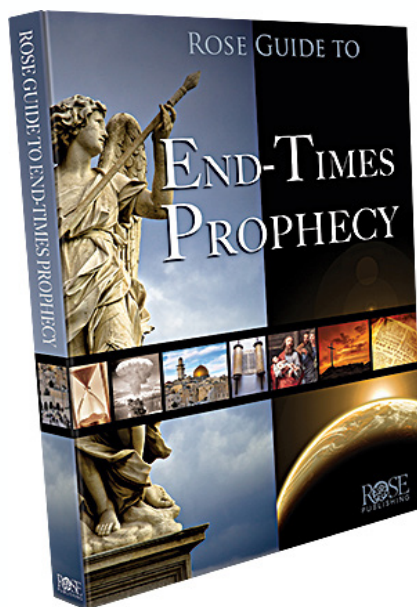
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appropriate than the finest horse and buggy. In the same way, on this side of the cross and empty tomb, perhaps a spiritual temple represents a greater fulfillment of Ezekiel's words than the grandest physical structure.

Whatever your precise perspective on how Ezekiel's temple relates to the end times, this much is true: **God will fulfill his inspired Word.** Whether the fulfillment is material or spiritual, earthly or heavenly, Ezekiel's meticulously mapped picture of restoration shows that God has a glorious plan for his people's future: He will dwell among his people, they will worship him in purity, and blessings will flow from his presence. This is part of the hope that will bring humanity's exile to an end.

FOUR PERSPECTIVES ON EZEKIEL'S TEMPLE⁷⁴

What Did Ezekiel See?	Where Is the Temple Located?	When And How Is the Temple Constructed?	Which Views of the End Times Might Take This Perspective on the Temple?
A physical structure?	Jerusalem	The temple will be a future, physical structure, built during the millennium.	Dispensational Premillennial, Historical Premillennial
A figurative ideal temple?	Heaven	The temple exists perpetually in the heavens; Ezekiel's temple was not intended to represent any physical structure.	Amillennial, Postmillennial, Historical Premillennial
A figurative ideal temple?	Blueprint	The temple represents an ideal for God's people in the mind of God; Ezekiel's temple was not intended to represent any physical structure.	Amillennial, Postmillennial, Historical Premillennial
A real heavenly temple?	In heaven, will come to earth	The temple exists in the heavens and will be revealed on earth at the end of time.	Amillennial, Postmillennial, Historical Premillennial

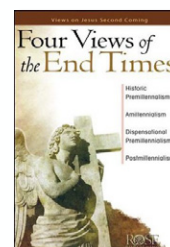


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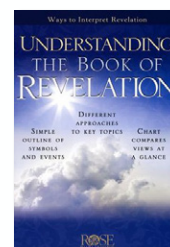
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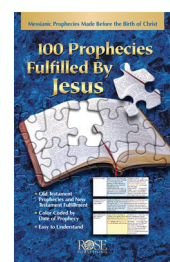
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