



Book of Ezekiel

Chapter 40

Theme: Purpose of the vision

Michael Fronczak
Bible Study Resource Center
Beit-Lechem Ministries
564 Schaeffer Dr.
Coldwater, Michigan 49036
www.biblestudyresourcecenter.com

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Theme: Description of the millennial temple, worship in the millennial temple; return of the glory of the Lord. In this concluding section of the Book of Ezekiel we find a description of the millennial temple, the worship of the millennial temple, and a vision concerning the land.

Clarke Introduction: The prophecy or vision, which begins here, continues to the end of the Book. The Temple of Jerusalem lying in ruins when Ezekiel had this vision, (for its date as the fourteenth year after the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar), the Jews needed consolation. If they were not promised a restoration of the temple, they would not feel so great an interest in returning home. It is thought by some that no model of Solomon's Temple had remained. To direct them, therefore, in the dimensions, parts, order, and rules of their new temple might be one reason why Ezekiel is so particular in the description of the old; to which the new was conformable in figure and parts, though inferior in magnificence, on account of the poverty of the nation at the time. Whatever was august or illustrious in the prophetic figures, and not literally fulfilled in or near their own times, the ancient Jews properly considered as belonging to the time of the Messiah. Accordingly, upon finding that the latter temple fell short of the model of the temple here described by Ezekiel, they supposed the prophecy to refer, at least in part, to the period now mentioned. And we, who live under the Gospel dispensation, have apostolical authority for the assertion that the temple and temple worship were emblematic of Christ's Church, frequently represented in the New Testament under the metaphor of a temple, in allusion to the symmetry, beauty, and firmness of that of Solomon; to its orderly worship; and to the manifestations it held of the Divine Presence. This chapter commences with the time, manner, and end of the vision, vv. 1-5. We have next a description of the east gate, vv. 6-19, the north gate, vv. 20-22, and the south gate, vv. 24-31. A farther description of the east gate, vv. 32-34, and of the north gate, vv. 35-38. Account of the eight tables, vv. 39-43; of the chambers, vv. 44-47; and of the porch of the temple, vv. 48, 49.

Ezekiel 40:1

In the five and twentieth year of our captivity, in the beginning of the year, in the tenth day of the month, in the fourteenth year after that the city was smitten, in the selfsame day the hand of the LORD was upon me, and brought me thither.

Missler: A couple of thoughts, there is some dispute as to exactly when the year began. This is not prior to the ecclesiastical and civil years we are now familiar with if you know the Hebrew calendar at all. If it is the 10th day of the 7th month Tishri, it would be Atonement Day. The first day of that month Tishri became their Rosh HaSahnnah, the civil new year. It is one view of Leviticus 25:9. If this was Tishri then the 10th day would be Yom Kippur (Leviticus 23:24 and Numbers 29:1).

It is more likely, I believe, that this is the 10th day of the First month that this occurs. If that is the case, the first month is Nisan. The 10th of Nisan is the day when the preparations begin for Passover. The lambs are set aside (Exodus 12:3-6) to see if they are spotless. Now if this is the 10th of Nisan, then this prophecy of the Temple is being given to Ezekiel on the day of the preparation for the Passover.

BKC: The vision of the new temple came to Ezekiel in the 25th year of... exile, at the beginning of the year, on the 10th of the month, in the 14th year after the fall of the city. The date was sometime in 573 B.C. The phrase “the beginning of the year” poses some problems. The Israelite religious new year began in Nisan (April-May) and was established at the time of the Exodus (Ex. 12:1-2). However, in Israel’s later history the seventh month, Tishri (October-November), became established as the first month of Israel’s civil or regnal year. So the date would be either April 28, 573 B.C. or October 22, 573 B.C. The October date was also the Day of Atonement (cf. Lev. 23:27).

On that very day... God... took Ezekiel back to Jerusalem in a vision (cf. Ezek. 8:1-3). Jerusalem was then vastly different from what it was before. Ezekiel was led on a “tour” of the future temple which he recorded in remarkable detail. This tour was given by a man, probably an angel, whose appearance was like bronze.

McGee: Jerusalem has been destroyed and the temple is burned, but Ezekiel is to be shown now the temple that will be in that city during the millennial Kingdom.

Usually people say that a vision is ‘like a dream’. But what happened to Ezekiel was much more powerful than a dream. Ezekiel emphasizes this. He reports that the power of the Lord came upon him. And then he seemed to be in the city. Or perhaps he was actually there. Certainly, it seemed to be reality to him.

This was about 12 years before the release of Jehoiachin (Jeremiah 52:31).

LAN: The building of the Temple envisioned a time of complete restoration to the exiles, a time when God would return to his people. The Temple was built from 520 to 515 B.C. (see Ezra 5-6) but fell short of Ezekiel's plan (Haggai 2:3; Zechariah 4:10). This vision of the Temple has been interpreted in four main ways: (1) This is the Temple Zerubbabel should have built from 520 to 515 B.C. and is the actual blueprint Ezekiel intended. But due to disobedience (43:2-10), it was never followed. (2) This is a literal Temple to be rebuilt during the millennial reign of Christ. (3) This Temple is symbolic of the true worship of God by the Christian church right now. (4) This Temple is symbolic of the future and eternal reign of God when his presence and blessing fill the earth.

Whether the Temple is literal or symbolic, it seems clear that this is a vision of God's final perfect Kingdom. This gave hope to the people of Ezekiel's time who had just seen their nation and its Temple destroyed with no hope of rebuilding it in the near future. The details given in this vision gave the people even more hope that what Ezekiel saw had come from God and would surely happen in the future.

Ezekiel explained God's dwelling place in words and images the people could understand. God wanted them to see the great splendor he had planned for those who lived faithfully. This kind of Temple was never built, but it was a vision intended to typify God's perfect plan for his people—the centrality of worship, the presence of the Lord, the blessings flowing from it, and the orderliness of worship and worship duties. Don't let the details obscure the point of this vision: One day all those who have been faithful to God will enjoy eternal life with him. Let the majesty of this vision lift you and teach you about the God you worship and serve.

JSB: The date formula identifies 40. 1- 48. 35 as the thirteenth and culminating major section of the book of Ezekiel. 'In the twenty- fifth year... at the beginning of the year, the tenth day of the month,' 10 Tishri, 573- 572 BCE, Yom Kippur. Ezekiel's vision of the Temple builds upon God's earlier promises (37. 24- 38) to make a covenant of friendship (peace) with Israel and to place the sanctuary among them forever.

Ezekiel 40:2

In the visions of God brought he me into the land of Israel, and set me upon a very high mountain, by which *was* as the frame of a city on the south.

Missler: Bear in mind that this whole thing was a vision. Ezekiel was not in Jerusalem; he was in Babylon. But, as is characteristic of prophecies, he was transported in the spirit as a vision, or what have you, into the Land of Israel some 300- 400 miles away. We do not know what mountain this was on. Some think it was Mt Hermon, and others Mt Zion (Isaiah 2:2; Micah 4:1; Ezekiel 17:22; 20:40). But, he was approaching the city from the North.

This city was the earthly Jerusalem that will be built by Christ at His second coming (Ezekiel 45:6-7; Ezekiel 48:15-35).

JSB: Ezekiel is transported to Mt. Zion, the site of the Temple (see Isa. 2. 1; Mic. 4. 1). The city of Jerusalem is immediately to 'the south.'

At first sight, Ezekiel thought that he saw a city. But actually, this was just the temple and the holy buildings that surrounded it. The old temple was in a city, that is, Jerusalem. But Ezekiel saw a temple which was not in a city. All the area round the temple was very holy (43:12). And the capital city was separate from it (45:1-6). This was for a reason. It was necessary to separate this land from other land. Something that belongs especially to God deserves the greatest honour. One must never confuse holy things with things that are not holy. God protested about the wicked behaviour of the Israelites when their doors were next to the door of his *temple (43:8). So in Ezekiel's vision, the *temple and the city were separate.

Ezekiel 40:3

And he brought me thither, and, behold, *there was* a man, whose appearance *was* like the appearance of brass, with a line of flax in his hand, and a measuring reed; and he stood in the gate.

Missler: Remember in Zechariah 2:1-2 we had a man with a measuring reed. In Revelation 11:1 a man commanded John to measure. And in Revelation 21 and so on. So this idea of being instructed to measure, regard, recognize and examine for flaws is interesting. He is measuring the Temple.

The man we have here whose appearance was as the appearance of bronze you might suspect already, but Chapter 44 gives more the impression that this is what we know in the Old Testament as the Angel of the Lord (44:2, 5). Not just an angel, the Angel of the Lord, a very unique title. Most scholars see him as Jesus Christ in His Old Testament appearance.

We also see here the use of bronze; and some people say it is copper or brass, it probably really is more of an alloy of copper. It typically speaks of three things. "Strength" as in 1 Kings 4:13, Job 40:18, Jeremiah 1:18; 15:20 and Isaiah uses it as "unwavering steadfastness" in 48:4. This metal had the property of not yielding to heat, and that is why it was used for altars and things. And so it speaks of strength and unyielding steadfastness. Leviticallly it symbolized judgment (since it could safely hold metal, and fire was used for sacrifice judgments; Deuteronomy 28:23; Leviticus 26:19; and Micah 4:13). That's why in Jesus Christ, as He tries His enemies, we see Him in Revelation and elsewhere, as with feet of bronze, speaking of judgment. We see that same identity here, with "appearance of bronze."

Measuring

A line of flax in his hand, and a measuring reed. The impression by most commentators is that these are 2 measuring devices, one for shorter distances, and one for longer ones. (It would seem, can't be proven.)

One thing I might mention is that in 3 places: Zechariah 2:1, Revelation 11:1 and 21:15 (and also in Isaiah 40), we have an angel measuring. There seems to be the undertone of God laying out title. As in surveying His land, putting His markers up, defining His boundaries. This is a way of ascribing importance to God's possessions.

McGee: Every time in Scripture that we find a man with a measuring rod -- it generally is an angel, and it is an angel here -- it means that God is getting ready to move again in dealing with His earthly people. We find this again in the minor prophets and in the Book of Revelation.

JSB: Ezekiel's guide recalls the bronze- colored creatures that supported God's throne chariot (1. 5- 14; see also 8. 2). The 'cord of linen' and the 'measuring rod' enable the guide to instruct Ezekiel in the dimensions of the Temple structures.

The man was like *bronze. Clearly, this was not an ordinary man. Ezekiel's guide to this *temple would be an *angel. The *angel moved and walked like a man. But his skin seemed like metal. So the *angel was very impressive. And like metal, he was very strong and powerful. Too many people imagine that *angels are like the pictures on Christmas cards. Such people are wrong. The Bible describes *angels as strong soldiers, who fight battles against evil forces. They fight a war on God's behalf, in order to rescue his people.

This angel carried an architect's tools. He would measure the temple. In the Bible, 'to measure' is often a picture in words. It does not merely mean to work out the size of something. It also means to examine the quality of something. So Ezekiel does not

merely report on the size of the temple. Also, he records how well the people were worshipping God.

Ezekiel 40:4

And the man said unto me, Son of man, behold with thine eyes, and hear with thine ears, and set thine heart upon all that I shall shew thee; for to the intent that I might shew *them* unto thee *art* thou brought hither: declare all that thou seest to the house of Israel.

Dake: Four commands to Ezekiel:

1. Behold with your eyes.
2. Hear with your ears.
3. Set your heart upon all that I will show you.
4. Declare all that you see to Israel.

This vision was God's message to the Israelites. God did not merely show Ezekiel these things for Ezekiel's own pleasure. God had an important message and the people needed to know that message.

Missler: We get the impression that God wants us to pay attention to what is going on, as if to say, "This is important." On the one hand the focus of this prophecy is on Israel, on the other hand, I believe that for us there is a spiritual value in its study. While denotatively it refers to Israel; spiritually we all benefit from it.

McGee: It is my personal feeling that Ezekiel was brought literally to Jerusalem and shown there a vision of the millennial temple of the future.

Ezekiel 40:5

And behold a wall on the outside of the house round about, and in the man's hand a measuring reed of six cubits *long* by the cubit and an hand breadth: so he measured the breadth of the building, one reed; and the height, one reed.

In other words, not the normal cubit, but a cubit and a handbreath. A special kind of cubit.

BKC: The angelic being with Ezekiel had a measuring rod... six long cubits, each of which was a cubit and a hand-breadth. A common cubit was about 18 inches long and a long cubit (probably the one used in Ezek.) was about 21 inches long So the measuring rod was about 10½ feet in length. The wall surrounding the temple was 10½ feet (one... rod) thick and 10½ feet (one rod) high.

Dake: [reed of six cubits long by the cubit and an hand breadth] A measuring reed was six cubits, but this one was based on the long cubit which is defined here as "the cubit and an hand breadth." A cubit was 18 inches long and the hand breadth, which is width of the hand at the base of the fingers, was a sixth of a cubit or 3 inches. So the long cubit was 21 inches and this reed was 10 feet 6 inches long. Therefore, the outer wall of the house, which was the outer wall of the outer court surrounding the temple, was 10 feet 6 inches tall and 10 feet 6 inches thick.

Ezekiel begins here a list of the measurements of the temple. This passage is very difficult to read and to understand. But some people have studied this passage very carefully. They have been able to draw plans of what Ezekiel saw. Their plans show that these measurements are correct. All the buildings would fit into the area that Ezekiel described. They would be in the correct positions and the spaces between the buildings would be correct.

I saw a wall that went all round the temple area. The stick that the man had was 6 long cubits. But each cubit was a cubit plus the width of a hand. The man measured the wall. It was one stick high and one stick wide.

Ezekiel 40:6

Then came he unto the gate which looketh toward the east, and went up the stairs thereof, and measured the threshold of the gate, *which was one reed broad*; and the other threshold *of the gate, which was one reed broad*.

Missler: A reed is 6 cubits. There are different types of cubits, the Egyptian one, the Babylonian one, but the Hebrew cubit was approximately 18 inches (Deuteronomy 3:11). The problem is not so much the cubit, the problem here is the handbreath. The word for handbreath could mean any of several different things. Some scholars believe the cubit to be about 21 inches, not 18", plus a hand breath which would add about 3 or 4 inches. Without going through all kinds of possibilities, it is between 18" and 24" in length. (Most commentators reckon the cubit to be 18".) The reed would then be about 12 feet. So this entire structure was about 500 cubits on a side (it was square) which means it was something less than 1000 feet on a side.

BKC: Ezekiel passed into the outer court through the gate facing east. This was one of three gates leading into the outer court. Since it faced east, it was the most important gate (cf. comments on 44:1-3). He described the gate in detail, with its steps... threshold, guards' alcoves... portico facing the temple... with palm trees (40:16) along the projecting walls (see the sketch "The Gate to the Millennial Temple").

Dake: Then—after measuring the wall around the temple as to height and thickness, he was brought to the east gate. Here there were stairs from the outer threshold through the thick wall to the inner threshold (Ezekiel 40:6,22,26).

JSB: 40. 6- 7: The 'gate that faced eastward' is the main gate of the Temple complex, which faces east toward the sun. It is built according to the basic pattern of the fortified Solomonic gates at Gezer, Hazor, and Megiddo, with an initial 'threshold of the gate,' three recessed chambers on either side, and the 'inner vestibule of the gate.'

Ezekiel saw a wall. It surrounded the entire temple area. It was strong and well-made. It made the area like a castle. Nobody could enter the temple except through the gates. Nobody could worship there unless they went through the gates. Some people think that there are many ways to God. In other words, they want to worship God in whatever manner pleases them. But people can only worship God in the manner that pleases him.

The angel's measuring stick was like a long ruler. Ezekiel saw that the stick used the royal measurements. These measurements were longer than normal measurements. So the standard for this temple was not the ordinary human standards. This temple was a royal building because it was the house of God. And God is the king of kings.

Ezekiel recorded the measurements as the *angel measured the east gate. It was one of three gates that led into the *temple area. (That is, the 'outer area'.)

For us today, this description is hard to understand, even in EasyEnglish. But the basic plan was this. Each gate was a large, impressive building. It included rooms for the *temple guards. It was their duty to keep the *temple *holy. People should only bring animals for *sacrifice if there was nothing wrong with the animals. Foreigners should not enter the *temple. And people should only use the *temple buildings for proper, sacred purposes.

For Ezekiel and for the Israelites, this description would be very familiar. The design of the gates was something that he had often seen. People who study ancient cities have discovered similar gates in Israel. Those gates were from the time of Solomon, who also built the first temple. So it is very likely that this was the design of the original temple gates. As a young man, Ezekiel would have often entered the temple through those gates.

So in the temple in Ezekiel's vision, the gates were the same as in the old temple. The Babylonians had destroyed that temple, but God's standards had not changed. He still wanted people to worship him in the same manner, that is, with a humble attitude. The old temple had not failed because of its design. There was nothing wrong with the design. It was the attitude of the people that was wrong. It was their wicked behaviour that was wrong. God had not changed. It was the people who changed. And when they opposed him, he had to declare judgement against them (18:29).

Ezekiel 40:7

And every little chamber was one reed long, and one reed broad; and between the little chambers were five cubits; and the threshold of the gate by the porch of the gate within was one reed.

Dake: [little chamber was one reed long, and one reed broad; and between the little chambers were five cubits] There were 6 little chambers, 3 on each side of the walk from the inside of the wall to the inside gate which was also 10 feet 6 inches wide, each being a reed (10 feet 6 inches) square, with 5 cubits (8 feet 9 inches, based on the long cubit of 21 inches) between the chambers (Ezekiel 40:7-10).

The rooms for the guards were one stick long and one stick wide. The walls, that came out between the rooms for the guards, were 5 cubits thick. The width of the room next to the entrance that led to the temple was one stick.

Ezekiel 40:8

He measured also the porch of the gate within, one reed.

Ezekiel did not go through the gate, the angel did, and apparently read off those measurements. The Eastward Gate was only gate God would go through. We will see later on that He goes through that gate and then it gets sealed.

Ezekiel 40:9

Then measured he the porch of the gate, eight cubits; and the posts thereof, two cubits; and the porch of the gate *was* inward.

JSB: 40. 9: 'Its supports,' projecting columns that may have served as a door jamb. Windows provide light for the recessed chambers and the vestibule.

Ezekiel 40:10

And the little chambers of the gate eastward *were* three on this side, and three on that side; they three *were* of one measure: and the posts had one measure on this side and on that side.

Dake: [posts had one measure on this side and on that side] Each of the posts of the gate, on each side of the entrance through the 10 feet 6 inches wall and past the chambers on each side, from the inside of the wall to the porch of the gate measured 2 cubits—3 feet 6 inches (Ezekiel 40:9-10).

Ezekiel 40:11

And he measured the breadth of the entry of the gate, ten cubits; *and* the length of the gate, thirteen cubits.

The breadth of the gate entry was 10 cubits, or 17 feet 6 inches.
The length of the gate was 13 cubits, or 22 feet 9 inches.

Ezekiel 40:12

The space also before the little chambers *was* one cubit *on this side*, and the space *was* one cubit on that side: and the little chambers *were* six cubits on this side, and six cubits on that side.

[space also before the little chambers] The barrier, border, or parapet.

[one cubit] A long cubit was 21 inches.

[six cubits] This would be 10 feet 6 inches

Ezekiel 40:13

He measured then the gate from the roof of *one* little chamber to the roof of another: the breadth *was* five and twenty cubits, door against door.

Dake: [five and twenty cubits, door against door] This would be 43 feet 9 in. This refers to the distance from the chambers of the outer court wall to those of the inner court wall.

Ezekiel 40:14

He made also posts of threescore cubits, even unto the post of the court round about the gate.

Sixty long cubits would be 105 feet.

JSB: 40. 14:'And the gate next to the support on every side of the court:' There were five gates to the women's courtyard of the Second Temple, the two Huldah gates to the south, the Kiponos gate to the west, the Tadi gate to the north, and the eastern gate ('m. Mid.' 1. 3).

Ezekiel 40:15

And from the face of the gate of the entrance unto the face of the porch of the inner gate *were* fifty cubits.

Fifty long cubits would be 87 feet 6 inches.

Ezekiel 40:16

And *there were* narrow windows to the little chambers, and to their posts within the gate round about, and likewise to the arches: and windows *were* round about inward: and upon *each* post *were* palm trees.

Missler: If this is what I think, this gate structure is very typical in castles, where there is a gate, but then there are little antechambers as you go through the main gate.

The palm trees are interesting, because they were widely used by Solomon in his Temple. According to the Song of Solomon, palm trees were intended to mean beauty (Song of Solomon 7:7).

In Psalm 92:12-14 they were intended to convey fruitfulness. They also symbolized salvation and victory (Revelation 7:9). Perhaps more dramatically than in any other place, they appear in the Palm Sunday presentation of Jesus Christ as King, regal glory as seen in John 12:13 being an example.

Palm trees are also used of the seven Mosaic feasts. There is one particular feast where the palm tree is very visible, and that is the Feast of Tabernacles. The first 3 feasts point to Christ's First Coming. The last 3 feasts have both a memorial role and a prophetic role. The last 3 point to His Second Coming (Trumpets, Yom Kippur, and Feast of Tabernacles). Clearly, the climatic one being the feast of Tabernacles were the Palm tree is the primary element.

Ezekiel saw a familiar pattern by the doors. It was a picture of palm trees. Such patterns were in the old temple too (1 Kings 6:29). The palm tree is a tall, strong tree. The Bible uses it as a word picture of a good person who is loyal to God (Psalm 92:12-15). It is also a tree with very plentiful fruit (Song of Solomon 7:7-8). In the Bible, fruit is often a word picture of the results when a good person works for God (Psalm 128:2-3; Galatians 5:22).

Ezekiel 40:17

Then brought he me into the outward court, and, lo, *there were chambers, and a pavement made for the court round about: thirty chambers were upon the pavement.*

BKC: Entering the outer court, Ezekiel saw... a pavement... all around the court with 30 rooms along the pavement. These rooms were probably spaced in even numbers along the north, east, and south walls of the temple (see the sketch "The Millennial Temple"). The use of these rooms is not stated, but they may have been storage rooms or meeting rooms for the people when they celebrated their feasts (cf. Jer. 35:2). The distance from the inside of the lower gateway (i.e., the east gate) to the outside of the inner court (i.e., to the threshold of the gate leading to the inner court) was 175 feet (**100 cubits**).

Dake: [**thirty chambers were upon the pavement**] The size of a chamber, according to Ezekiel 40:7, was a reed long and a reed broad, or 10 feet 6 inches square.

JSB: 40. 17- 19: The '30 chambers' that line the 'outer court' (the "women's court"; 'm. Mid.' 2. 5) were used by the Levites for various activities (Jer. 35. 2- 4; Neh. 13. 4- 14). 'The lower court' and 'the inner gate' rearranges the nouns and adjectives so that they will agree in gender (see translators 'note' c- c '). They likely refer to the "inner court" in Heb, and "the lower gate," that would allow entry.

When Ezekiel had gone through the gate, he saw a large yard. We have called this yard 'the outer area'. It was on three sides of the temple. Ordinary people could enter the outer area. Here, they could worship God. But they could not go any further towards the temple. The inner spaces and buildings were very sacred, and only priests could enter there.

Ezekiel 40:18

And the pavement by the side of the gates over against the length of the gates was the lower pavement.

Dake: [the lower pavement] The lower pavement was the one in the outer court which filled the whole space between the outer wall and the inner wall, a pavement 500 cubits across and 100 cubits deep on each of the 4 sides, which would be equal to 875 feet across and 175 feet deep. It was several steps higher than the ground level outside the outer court wall, and several steps lower than that of the inner court (Ezekiel 40:18-19).

Ezekiel 40:19

Then he measured the breadth from the forefront of the lower gate unto the forefront of the inner court without, an hundred cubits eastward and northward.

Ezekiel 40:20

And the gate of the outward court that looked toward the north, he measured the length thereof, and the breadth thereof.

BKC: Ezekiel was then led from the east gate of the outer court to the north gate (vv. 20-23) and to the south gate (vv. 24-27). The design and dimensions of both gates were identical to those of the gate facing east.

The entrance, chambers, and other parts of the north gate were exactly like those of the east gate of Ezekiel 40:6-16 (Ezekiel 40:20-22).

JSB: 40. 20- 27: The gates for the outer court to the north and south are similar to the eastern gate. There is no western gate mentioned here as the Temple occupies the western side of the compound (contra 'm. Mid.' 1. 3, which mentions the western gate, but states that the northern gate was not used). Each of the three gates faces corresponding gates to the inner court.

Ezekiel 40:21

And the little chambers thereof were three on this side and three on that side; and the posts thereof and the arches thereof were after the measure of the first gate: the length thereof was fifty cubits, and the breadth five and twenty cubits.

[**fifty cubits**] Fifty long cubits would be 87 feet 6 inches.
[**five and twenty cubits**] This would be 43 feet 9 inches.

Ezekiel 40:22

And their windows, and their arches, and their palm trees, *were* after the measure of the gate that looketh toward the east; and they went up unto it by seven steps; and the arches thereof *were* before them.

Ezekiel 40:23

And the gate of the inner court *was* over against the gate toward the north, and toward the east; and he measured from gate to gate an hundred cubits.

Dake: [**inner court was over against the gate toward the north, and toward the east**] This refers to the 2 gates facing each other, the outer and inner court gates which had 100 cubits between them, that is, between the 2 walls.
[**hundred cubits**] This would be 175 feet

Ezekiel 40:24

After that he brought me toward the south, and behold a gate toward the south: and he measured the posts thereof and the arches thereof according to these measures.

Dake: [**the south: and he measured the posts thereof and the arches thereof according to these measures**] The south gate of the outer court wall was the same measurement and had the same kind of chambers, arches, posts, and steps as the east and north gates of Ezekiel 40:6-16,20-22 (Ezekiel 40:24-26).

Ezekiel 40:25

And *there were* windows in it and in the arches thereof round about, like those windows: the length *was* fifty cubits, and the breadth five and twenty cubits.

Ezekiel 40:26

And *there were* seven steps to go up to it, and the arches thereof *were* before them: and it had palm trees, one on this side, and another on that side, upon the posts thereof.

Dake: [**seven steps to go up to it**] There were 7 steps leading up from the outside of the outer wall, which was 10 feet 6 inches thick, to the pavement inside the wall. The same was true of all 3 gates—the east, north, and south gates (Ezekiel 40:6,22,26).
[**palm trees, one on this side, and another on that side, upon the posts thereof**] The palm trees and posts were the same for all 3 gates (Ezekiel 40:16,22,26).

Ezekiel 40:27

And there was a gate in the inner court toward the south: and he measured from gate to gate toward the south an hundred cubits.

The gate of the inner court wall facing the south outer court gate was the same as the other gates of the inner wall which faced the gates in the outer wall.

Ezekiel 40:28

And he brought me to the inner court by the south gate: and he measured the south gate according to these measures;

BKC: After measuring the outer court the angel measured the inner court. He went from the south gate of the outer court through the south gate of the inner court. This gate had the same measurements as the others. The south gate (vv. 28-31), east gate (vv. 32-34), and north gate (vv. 35-37) of the inner court were identical and were also the same as the three gates of the outer court except that the porticos of the inner gates faced the outer court. The portico or vestibule was reversed on these gates (see the sketch "The Millennial Temple").

The inner court was the upper pavement inside the inner wall. The gates to the inner wall facing the outer wall gates, and chambers, posts, arches, and other parts of the gates were the same throughout (Ezekiel 40:28-43).

JSB: 40. 28- 37: The south, east, and north gates to the 'inner forecourt' (lit. "the inner court," or the "court of the Israelites"; 'm. Mid.' 2. 6) are similar to those for the outer court. The Second Temple had seven gates to this court ('m. Mid.' 1. 4- 5), three to the south (Kindling, Firstlings, and Water Gates); three to the north (Flame, Offering, and Chamber of the Hearth Gates), and one to the east (Nicanor Gate).

At last, the angel took Ezekiel to the gates that led into the temple's inner area. This was a very special moment for Ezekiel. When Ezekiel lived in Jerusalem, he was too young to perform the duties of a priest. And only a priest could enter the inner area of the temple. So the guards who worked at these gates would only allow priests to pass through them. (People who offered sacrifices could also enter the inner gates. But unlike the priests, those people would not remain in the inner area. They would leave as soon as they had handed over their sacrifice to the priests.)

The design of these gates was again, familiar to Ezekiel. Each gate was similar to the outer gates, except that the rooms were the opposite way round. Perhaps this was to make the arrangement more convenient for the guards.

There was one very important difference between the outer gates and the inner gates. Ezekiel mentions this difference three times. Perhaps he wanted to emphasize it. As the angel measured, Ezekiel counted the steps. Each inner gate had 8 steps upwards (verse 31, 34 and 37). But the outer gates only had 7 steps.

Many Psalms have an ancient title. We cannot be sure whether these titles are original. The title of Psalms 120 to 134 is the same: 'a step song'. People are not sure about the meaning of this title. However, the author of these Psalms begins in a foreign country (Psalm 120). And his Psalms end in the holy place in the temple (Psalm 134). So these Psalms are like a series of upward steps. And with each step, there is a closer relationship with God. That is a good way to describe a traveller's long journey to worship God at the *temple. And it is especially so, as the temple was on the top of a hill.

There are other passages that show a similar idea (for example, Genesis 28:12; Habakkuk 3:19). So perhaps the steps are a word picture that describes a close relationship with God. And the number of steps increases because Ezekiel was getting closer and closer to the most *holy place. It was as if he was climbing ever closer to God.

Ezekiel 40:29

And the little chambers thereof, and the posts thereof, and the arches thereof, according to these measures: and *there were* windows in it and in the arches thereof round about: *it was* fifty cubits long, and five and twenty cubits broad.

Ezekiel 40:30

And the arches round about *were* five and twenty cubits long, and five cubits broad.

The arches were 43 feet 9 inches and 8 feet 9 inches broad.

Ezekiel 40:31

And the arches thereof *were* toward the utter court; and palm trees *were* upon the posts thereof: and the going up to it *had* eight steps.

Eight steps is kind of interesting. We so often think about seven being the number of completeness; and 6 as the number of man, one short of completeness, sinful. There were 6 steps going up to Solomon's throne. Solomon's salary was 666 shekels every year. Now seven does not mean "holy," it means "complete." Satan's man in Revelation has 7 heads, complete authority, not "holy" authority.

The number 8 is a new beginning, a start-over, the octave. It is generally identified then with Jesus Christ.

If you study the numerical value in either Hebrew or Greek, you will discover that the concepts of Satan typically have a numeric value that has 666 as a common denominator. If you study the titles of Jesus Christ, Son of Man, Son of God, etc. You will discover the common denominator or 888.

The one thing that leaps out at me, as I read all of this, and see the gates and the sizes and the symmetry and all of that, is that I have a hard time making it an allegory. There may

be symbolic meaning as we really come to understand more of this, but at the same time it is very literal.

There were 8 steps from the lower pavement of the outer court to the upper pavement of the inner court (Ezekiel 40:31,34,37).

Ezekiel 40:32

And he brought me into the inner court toward the east: and he measured the gate according to these measures.

Ezekiel 40:33

And the little chambers thereof, and the posts thereof, and the arches thereof, *were* according to these measures: and *there were* windows therein and in the arches thereof round about: *it was* fifty cubits long, and five and twenty cubits broad.

Ezekiel 40:34

And the arches thereof *were* toward the outward court; and palm trees *were* upon the posts thereof, on this side, and on that side: and the going up to it *had* eight steps.

Ezekiel 40:35

And he brought me to the north gate, and measured *it* according to these measures;

Ezekiel 40:36

The little chambers thereof, the posts thereof, and the arches thereof, and the windows to it round about: the length *was* fifty cubits, and the breadth five and twenty cubits.

Ezekiel 40:37

And the posts thereof *were* toward the utter court; and palm trees *were* upon the posts thereof, on this side, and on that side: and the going up to it *had* eight steps.

Ezekiel 40:38

And the chambers and the entries thereof *were* by the posts of the gates, where they washed the burnt offering.

Are they going to have offerings again? I thought Jesus Christ put an end to that.

BKC: At the sides of the inner gates tables were set up for slaughtering the sacrifices. Four tables were on one side of the gate and four on the other—eight tables in all. The sacrifices prepared on these tables would then be offered on the altar in the inner court.

Many have objected to the thought of animal sacrifices being reinstated during the Millennium. Since these sacrifices, it is argued, revert back to the Levitical sacrificial system, they would seem to be out of place in the Millennium. This has caused some to take the passage symbolically rather than literally. However, no difficulty exists if one understands the proper function of these sacrifices. First, animal sacrifices *never* took away human sin; only the sacrifice of Christ can do that (Heb. 10:1-4, 10). In Old Testament times Israelites were saved by grace through faith, and the sacrifices helped restore a believer's fellowship with God. Second, even after the church began, Jewish believers did not hesitate to take part in the temple worship (Acts 2:46; 3:1; 5:42) and even to offer sacrifices (Acts 21:26). They could do this because they viewed the sacrifices as memorials of Christ's death.

The millennial sacrifices will differ from the Levitical sacrifices though there are some similarities (see comments on Ezek. 45:18-25). Other passages also refer to a sacrificial system in the Millennium (Isa. 56:7; 66:20-23; Jer. 33:18; Zech. 14:16-21; Mal. 3:3-4).

LAN: The washing of the sacrifices was done according to the standards of preparation established in Leviticus 1:6-9. This washing was part of the process of presenting an acceptable sacrifice to God.

Dake: These chambers were inside the inner wall and on both sides of the north gate; and there were four tables on each side where sacrifices were slain, and two tables of hewn stone on each side where the instruments were laid (Ezekiel 40:39-43).

JSB: 40. 38- 43:Chambers were built by the vestibule of the gate to prepare sacrificial animals for the 'burnt offering' (Lev. 1. 3- 17), the 'sin' (or purification) 'offering' (Lev. 4. 1- 5. 13), and the 'guilt offering' (Lev. 5. 14- 6. 7).

When Ezekiel entered the inner area, he was standing in front of the temple building. But before Ezekiel went into the temple, he had to see the place of sacrifice. A person can only worship God in the proper manner after God has forgiven that person's sins. In the temple in Ezekiel's vision, people had to make sacrifices. Sacrifices were necessary so that God would forgive the people's sins (Leviticus 4:35; Hebrews 9:22). This principle is still true. People cannot achieve a right relationship with God by their own efforts. They can only humbly confess their sins to God. However, we do not still offer animals as sacrifices. That is because the death of Jesus the Messiah is the perfect sacrifice for sin.

Ezekiel 40:39

And in the porch of the gate *were* two tables on this side, and two tables on that side, to slay thereon the burnt offering and the sin offering and the trespass offering.

Burnt Offering...

Sin Offering...

Trespass Offering...

Offerings in Tribulation Times (Daniel 9:27).

McGee: In verses 39-42 we find that the Mosaic system will be restored with the reinstating of the levitical liturgy and the burnt offering, the sin offering, and the trespass offering.

Ezekiel 40:40

And at the side without, as one goeth up to the entry of the north gate, *were* two tables; and on the other side, which *was* at the porch of the gate, *were* two tables.

Ezekiel 40:41

Four tables *were* on this side, and four tables on that side, by the side of the gate; eight tables, whereupon they slew *their sacrifices*.

Missler: Slew their sacrifices. This has all kinds of implications. This obviously implies a return to the sacrificial system. But that raises all kinds of interesting questions. "Death in the Millennium?" Sure, apparently you can slay animals. There are other indications that there will be death, it is kind of strange. See Isaiah 65:17, 20.

McGee: There will be sacrifices offered in the millennial temple.

Ezekiel 40:42

And the four tables *were* of hewn stone for the burnt offering, of a cubit and an half long, and a cubit and an half broad, and one cubit high: whereupon also they laid the instruments wherewith they slew the burnt offering and the sacrifice.

The fact that these were of hewn stone is of itself interesting, see Exodus 20:25 which specifies unhewn stone for its altar.

Each of the 4 stone tables for instruments was 31.5 inches square.

Ezekiel 40:43

And within *were* hooks, an hand broad, fastened round about: and upon the tables *was* the flesh of the offering.

The hooks were to hang the animals on while killing and preparing them for sacrifice rituals.

Ezekiel 40:44

And without the inner gate *were* the chambers of the singers in the inner court, which *was* at the side of the north gate; and their prospect *was* toward the south: one at the side of the east gate *having* the prospect toward the north.

McGee: There will also be music and singers in the temple.

BKC: As Ezekiel entered the inner court he again noticed two rooms, one at the side of the north gate and facing south and another at the side of the south gate facing north (see rooms designated “RP” in the sketch “The Millennial Temple”). The room on the north side was the one facing south (i.e., its entrance opened to the south into the inner court). This room was for the priests in charge of the temple, and the room on the south side was for the priests in charge of the altar. These rooms probably will serve as utility rooms and rest areas for the priests on duty. These priests will be descended from Zadok (cf. 43:19; 44:15; 48:11), the high priest in Solomon’s day (1 Kings 1:26-27).

The rooms for the singers were at the side of the north gate facing the great altar of sacrifice toward the south.

JSB: 40. 44- 47:Chambers were placed by the sides of the north and east (Septuagint reads "south") for the priests who have charge of the Temple and the altar. The measurements of the inner court of the Second Temple differ from the 100 square cubit figure given here. 'M. Middot' 2. 6 states that they are 135 by 11 cubits.

There was a lot of work for the priests who carried out the sacrifices. The temple needed many priests for these tasks. But there were only a few tasks in the temple building. Only a few priests had the honour to serve there on any particular day. It was a very special honour. On that particular day, they would prepare for their work in a separate room. All the priests’ work was very holy. But to serve God inside his holy place was the holiest task of all.

All the priests in the temple in this vision belonged to Zadok’s family. This was different from the rule during Ezekiel’s life. We need to understand the reasons. The Israelite priests had always been the descendants of Aaron. Aaron lived many centuries before

Ezekiel, so Aaron's family would include many thousands of people. And all the men from that family who were over 30 years old were priests. But not all these men had been holy. In fact, many of these men were very evil. And they had allowed God's temple to become a wicked place (chapter 8). God could not allow this to continue.

So God made a new rule. His priests would be from the family of Zadok. Ezekiel 44:15-16 gives the reason why God chose this family. They were loyal to God when other Israelites were not. Zadok was an important priest who lived at the same time as King David. Zadok remained loyal to King David, even when other priests did not (2 Samuel 15:24-27; 1 Kings 1:7-8). So the phrase 'priests from Zadok's family' means priests who are loyal to God.

Ezekiel 40:45

And he said unto me, This chamber, whose prospect is toward the south, is for the priests, the keepers of the charge of the house.

This was for the house priests.

Ezekiel 40:46

And the chamber whose prospect is toward the north is for the priests, the keepers of the charge of the altar: these are the sons of Zadok among the sons of Levi, which come near to the LORD to minister unto him.

This chamber for the altar priests was on the opposite side of the great altar and at the south gate, facing the altar and the north.

Missler: This mention of a particular line in the priesthood is interesting. In the first two chapters of 1 Kings you will find a situation where Zadok is mentioned. Here in Ezekiel he will be mentioned a total of 4 times (43:19; 44:15; 48:11).

If you recall there was a rebellion of Adonijah under Solomon, and Abiathar joined that rebellion which caused Solomon to dispose Abiathar from the priesthood, and that is when the House of Eli was set aside and Zadok chosen in his stead by God. See 1 Kings 1:7; 2:26-27.

For me, the very mention of a literal name, a real person, Zadok, implies that this is not allegorical. We have a literal name; and even Jesus Christ in His parables never mentioned names. When He talked about the rich man and Lazarus in Luke 17, it was a different ball game; it was not a parable; Lazarus was a real guy. Because of that New Testament perspective, when I see a name in an Old Testament passage like this, while there indeed may be mystical and supernatural things going on, I see it as being literal.

Ezekiel 40:47

So he measured the court, an hundred cubits long, and an hundred cubits broad, foursquare; and the altar *that was* before the house.

McGee: Our attention is again called to the fact that there will be an altar for sacrifices. In the Holy Land Hotel in Jerusalem there is a miniature replica of the city as it was in the days of Herod and the Lord Jesus. Actually it is quite a large model, and as far as I could tell when examining it closely, there is no altar for sacrifice in the temple model -- it has been left out. The orthodox Jews are a little embarrassed by an altar, and the liberal Jews want to get rid of it altogether. However, in the millennial temple there will be an altar.

Dake: [the court, an hundred cubits long, and an hundred cubits broad, foursquare] This altar court was the most inner court and the fourth perfect square of the sanctuary. It was 100 cubits or 175 feet square. The third square was 300 cubits or 525 feet square. The second was 500 cubits or 875 feet square. The first one was 5,250 feet square (see note, *Ezekiel 42:20). The great altar was 21 feet square with a base of 24 feet 6 inches square situated in the very center of the four squares (*Ezekiel 43:13-17, notes). See drawing in the map section.

Dake: [the house] The house refers to the temple proper whose front faced the great altar of sacrifice, its porch beginning with the west side of the center square (Ezekiel 40:47-41:26). The house or temple was located in another perfect square of 100 cubits each side (175 feet), which joined the 100-cubit square where the altar was located; it is called "the separate place" (Ezekiel 41:12-15; Ezekiel 42:1,10,13).

The inner area was the yard in front of the temple building. Here the altar stood. The fires of the sacrifices would burn continuously here. And the smoke would rise towards God in heaven. Ezekiel describes the altar in 43:13-27.

Ezekiel 40:48

And he brought me to the porch of the house, and measured *each* post of the porch, five cubits on this side, and five cubits on that side: and the breadth of the gate *was* three cubits on this side, and three cubits on that side.

Dake: [the porch of the house, and measured each post of the porch] The porch of the house, or the vestibule, consisted of a central opening with 2 columns on either side. These columns with the space between them were called the posts of the gate. The bases of the columns were a cubit or 21 inches square. The breadth of the gate was 3 cubits—5 feet 3 inches on each of the two sides, making 10 feet 6 inches altogether.

[five cubits] This would be 8 feet 9 inches.

[three cubits] This would be 5 feet 3 inches.

JSB: 40. 48: The 'portico' (Heb, "'ulam," 20 by 11 cubits [about 10 m by 6 m, 30 ft by 17 ft]) was an entry or reception room.

Ezekiel 40:49

The length of the porch was twenty cubits, and the breadth eleven cubits; and *he brought me* by the steps whereby they went up to it: and *there were* pillars by the posts, one on this side, and another on that side.

Note that the pillars Jachin and Boaz of Solomon's Temple (1 Kings 7:21) are also in this Temple.

[twenty cubits] This would be 35 feet.

[eleven cubits] This would be 19 feet 3 inches.

[pillars by the posts] These were the bases and the posts or pillars in the design of palm trees (Ezekiel 40:16,49).



