

Book of Ezekiel

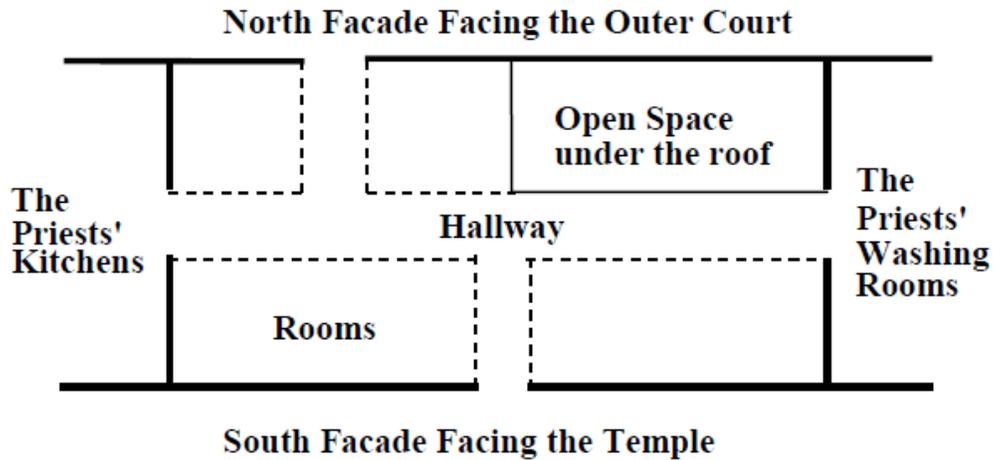
Chapter 42

Theme: Millennial Temple

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This is a very difficult section to interpret because the description of these structures is obscure in the Hebrew text.



Ezekiel 42:1

Then he brought me forth into the utter court, the way toward the north: and he brought me into the chamber that *was* over against the separate place, and which *was* before the building toward the north

Dake: [Then he brought me forth into the utter court, the way toward the north]

Then—after the general specifications of the sanctuary were given, the prophet was taken into the outward court (or the 500-cubit square) toward the north to view the rooms in the outer court (Ezekiel 42:1-8).

Ezekiel 42:2

Before the length of an hundred cubits *was* the north door, and the breadth *was* fifty cubits.

Constable: Ezekiel's guide next took him out the north inner gate into the outer court and showed him another building. It stood between the "separate area," the 20-cubit (33 feet 4 inches) space that bordered the temple proper, and "the building toward the north," evidently the complex of rooms in the outer court that stood against the north wall of the temple complex. The length of this building, east to west, was 100 cubits (166 feet 8 inches), and its width, north to south, was 50 cubits (83 feet 4 inches). This structure had a door on its north side.

Before the length of an hundred cubits—that is before “the separate place,” which was that length (Ez 41:13). He had before spoken of chambers for the officiating priests on the north and south gates of the inner court (Ez 40:44–46). He now returns to take a more exact view of them.¹

[**hundred cubits**] This would be 175 feet.

[**fifty cubits**] This would be 87 feet 6 inches.

Ezekiel 42:3

Over against the twenty cubits which were for the inner court, and over against the pavement which was for the utter court, was gallery against gallery in three stories.

42:15-20 The overall measurements of the Temple represented a square of *five hundred reeds* (875 ft, or 266 m) on a side. The total area was 765,625 sq. ft (70,756 sq. m).

[**twenty cubits**] This would be 35 feet.

[**three stories**] The rooms in the outer court were also 3 stories high with a walkway of 10 cubits breadth inward, and a way of 1 cubit; the doors opened toward the north (Ezekiel 42:3-4). This makes it clear that the rooms were on the outer wall of the 300-cubit square.

Ezekiel 42:4

And before the chambers was a walk of ten cubits breadth inward, a way of one cubit; and their doors toward the north.

Constable: There were colonnades (galleries, covered porches) outside this building facing the inner and outer courts (north and south). These matching colonnades were three stories high, as was the building itself. A 10-cubitwide (16 feet 8 inches) interior hallway ran the length of this building east to west and provided access to the rooms.

[**ten cubits**] This would be 17 feet 6 inches.

[**one cubit**] A long cubit was 21 inches.

¹Jamieson, R., Fausset, A. R., & Brown, D. (1997). A commentary, critical and explanatory, on the Old and New Testaments. On spine: Critical and explanatory commentary. (Eze 42:2-5). Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

Ezekiel 42:5

Now the upper chambers *were* shorter: for the galleries were higher than these, than the lower, and than the middlemost of the building.

[upper chambers were shorter] The third stories or top chambers were shorter than the first and second story rooms (Ezekiel 42:5-8). They were holy rooms for the priests (Ezekiel 42:13-14).

shorter—that is, the building became *narrower* as it rose in height. The chambers were many: so “in My Father’s house are many mansions” (Jn 14:2); and besides these there was much “room” still left (compare Lu 14:22). The chambers, though private, were near the temple. Prayer in our chambers is to prepare us for public devotions, and to help us in improving them.²

Ezekiel 42:6

For they *were* in three stories, but had not pillars as the pillars of the courts: therefore *the building* was straitened more than the lowest and the middlemost from the ground.

Constable: The rooms on the third story were smaller than the ones on the first and second stories because the colonnade on the third story took more room than the colonnades on the first and second stories. The third story colonnade did not rest on the exterior walls that reached down to the ground but on top of second-story rooms. Thus the third story colonnade was set back from the exterior walls rather than flush with the ones below it.

Ezekiel 42:7

And the wall that *was* without over against the chambers, toward the utter court on the forepart of the chambers, the length thereof *was* fifty cubits.

[fifty cubits] This would be 87 feet 6 inches.

Ezekiel 42:8

For the length of the chambers that *were* in the utter court *was* fifty cubits: and, lo, before the temple *were* an hundred cubits.

[an hundred cubits] This would be 175 feet.

²Jamieson, R., Fausset, A. R., & Brown, D. (1997). A commentary, critical and explanatory, on the Old and New Testaments. On spine: Critical and explanatory commentary. (Eze 42:5-16). Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

Ezekiel 42:9

And from under these chambers *was* the entry on the east side, as one goeth into them from the utter court.

Constable: The north facade of this building, facing the outer court, was only 50 cubits (83 feet 4 inches) wide. Perhaps the roofline was 100 cubits (166 feet 8 inches) long, and there was an open space 50 cubits (83 feet 4 inches) wide under the roof to the east of this facade. The south façade was 100 cubits (166 feet 8 inches) long, the west facade was 50 cubits (83 feet 4 inches) long, and the north facade was 50 cubits (83 feet 4 inches) long.

Ezekiel 42:10

The chambers *were* in the thickness of the wall of the court toward the east, over against the separate place, and over against the building.

Ezekiel 42:11

And the way before them *was* like the appearance of the chambers which *were* toward the north, as long as they, *and* as broad as they: and all their goings out *were* both according to their fashions, and according to their doors.

[like the appearance of the chambers which were toward the north] The chambers or rooms at all the entrances were the same as those already described in Ezekiel 41 (Ezekiel 42:9-12).

Ezekiel 42:12

And according to the doors of the chambers that *were* toward the south *was* a door in the head of the way, *even* the way directly before the wall toward the east, as one entereth into them.

Constable: There was a corresponding structure on the south side of the temple proper, the mirror image of the one on the north. The Hebrew text describes this building as on the east, but it must have been on the south, as the Septuagint translators concluded, in view of the complete symmetry of the whole temple complex. It too stood between the outer court and the "separate area" and faced the temple building.

Ezekiel 42:13

Then said he unto me, The north chambers *and* the south chambers, which *are* before the separate place, they *be* holy chambers, where the priests that approach unto the LORD shall eat the most holy things: there shall they lay the most holy things, and the meat offering, and the sin offering, and the trespass offering; for the place *is* holy.

Missler: This has to do with the use of these things. We have this inner court. In 1 Chronicles the priesthood was organized in 24 courses. It may be like that here also, and the fact that that is the only place in Scripture where 24 occurs, gives rise to our perception that the kings and priests in Revelation 5 are the redeemed because it is kings and priests together. 24 was the number of the priesthood.

Now there are two purposes for these chambers. One of the purposes for the chambers is as a place for the priests to keep their sacred vestments. It may come as a surprise to you, but they were instructed to eat the portion of the meal offering that was not burned (Leviticus 2:3, 10; 6:9-11; 10:12). They were to eat the flesh of the sin offerings and the trespass offerings. But they did not eat of the sin offering because that was given to the High Priest and the peoples because that was done outside the camp (Leviticus 6:9-23; 7:6). It all has more meaning if you have done a study of the different kinds of sacrifices. There is no mention of peace offerings because the Law did not require them to be eaten in the Holy places. So this is very subtly consistent with the Levitical Laws, as one would expect it to be, Ezekiel being trained as a priest.

[where the priests that approach unto the LORD shall eat the most holy things] Here we have the use of these particular rooms explained. They were dressing and eating rooms for the priests (Ezekiel 42:13-14).

[the most holy things, and the meat offering, and the sin offering, and the trespass offering] "The most holy things" were the showbread, the portions of the animals sacrificed, and the oil and wine offered with the sacrifices. The mention of meat offerings, sin offerings, and trespass offerings is the first proof in these chapters of their eternal observance in the eternal kingdom of the Messiah on earth. The priests are to be the ministers of such a sacrificial program (Ezekiel 42:14).

JSB: 42. 13- 14:The priests use the chambers to store and eat "the grain offering" (Lev. 2. 1- 16), "the sin (or purification) offering" (Lev. 4. 1- 5. 13), and "the guilt offering" (Lev. 5. 14- 6. 7). The priests must leave their holy vestments in these chambers before entering the outer court.

Ezekiel 42:14

When the priests enter therein, then shall they not go out of the holy *place* into the utter court, but there they shall lay their garments wherein they minister; for they *are* holy; and shall put on other garments, and shall approach to *those things* which *are* for the people.

Constable: Ezekiel's guide informed him that the rooms to the north and south of the "separate area" were for the priests to use when they ate the sacrifices that people brought to the temple. Under the Mosaic Law, the priests obtained parts of the burnt, grain, peace, sin, and trespass (guilt) offerings (Lev. 6-7). In the future, priests will receive parts of the grain, sin, and trespass offerings at least. The priests would deposit the offerings in these rooms. They were also dressing rooms for the priests since they could not go from the "separate area" or the inner court into the outer court without changing their clothes. In view of this statement, there must be access into each of these two buildings from the "separate area" as well as from the outer court.

"The burden of the present account is to show that the holiness of sacred space extends beyond the concentric design of the temple complex to the form of the auxiliary structures and the conduct of humans within those structures. Again the proportions of sacred space are more important than the appearance of the buildings."³

Ezekiel 42:15

Now when he had made an end of measuring the inner house, he brought me forth toward the gate whose prospect *is* toward the east, and measured it round about.

Constable: The dimensions of the temple enclosure 42:15-20

When the man had finished measuring the temple and the structures immediately associated with it, he led Ezekiel out the east outer gate. He measured the exterior of the temple wall, and it was 500 cubits (about 833 feet 4 inches) on each of its four sides (cf. Rev. 21:13). The Hebrew text has "rods" rather than "reeds." This would result in the walls being 3,000 cubits (5,000 feet) on each side and the temple enclosure being almost one mile square. This seems much larger than what the dimensions of courts and structures inside the wall picture (cf. 45:2). This enclosed area is about 18 acres, larger than 13 American football fields.⁵⁶⁸ The man measured the wall with his measuring reed. The wall around the temple area separated what was holy inside from what was common outside.

"The entire area was much too large for Mount Moriah where Solomon's and Zerubbabel's temples stood. The scheme requires a great change in the topography of the land which will occur as indicated in Zechariah 14:9-11, the very time which Ezekiel had in view."⁴

³ 567Block, *The Book . . .* 48, p. 568.

⁴ Feinberg, p. 249.

JSB:42. 15- 20: The Temple complex is 500 'rods' square. Based on Ezek. 40. 5, a 'rod' is 6 cubits so that the Temple complex is 3,000 cubits square (Rashi), or about 1,500 m (4,500 ft) on a side. This is an extremely large area, equivalent to about 500 acres or two-thirds the area of Central Park in New York. Based on Ezek. 45. 2, Radak argues that it is 500 cubits square, but does not explain the term 'rods.' (This interpretation, giving an area of about 250 m [750 ft] on a side, or about 14 acres, is the one followed in the NJPS.) The outer wall marks the separation between the holy Temple and the profane world.

Ezekiel 42:16

He measured the east side with the measuring reed, five hundred reeds, with the measuring reed round about.

[measuring reed] A measure of 10 feet 6 inches, or 6 long cubits.

[five hundred reeds] The Septuagint reads: "five hundred cubits with the measuring reed" instead of "five hundred reeds." The Moffatt, Berkeley, and a few other versions and most commentators agree with this rendering; but here and in versions of Fenton, Young, and Rotherham it says "reeds" or "rods." Five hundred reeds would be 5,250 feet, nearly a mile square. If reeds instead of cubits is the true measurement in this passage, then we can make a new figure of a larger plot of ground around the 500 cubits mentioned in the measurements of these chapters. The wall around it might enclose landscaping, gardens, flowers and shrubs—nothing is said about what occupies such a space. The only reference is to a difference between a profane place and the sanctuary which is definitely the 500-cubit square of these many measurements (Ezekiel 42:20).

The perfect symmetry of Ezekiel's temple may represent the order and harmony in God's future kingdom.

five hundred reeds—the *Septuagint* substitutes "cubits" for "reeds," to escape the immense compass assigned to the whole, namely, a square of five hundred rods or three thousand cubits (two feet each; [Ez 40:5](#)), in all a square of one and one-seventh miles, that is, more than all ancient Jerusalem; also, there is much space thus left unappropriated. FAIRBAIRN rightly supports *English Version*, which agrees with the *Hebrew*. The vast extent is another feature marking the ideal character of the temple. It symbolizes the great enlargement of the kingdom of God, when Jehovah-Messiah shall reign at Jerusalem, and from thence to the ends of the earth ([Is 2:2–4](#); [Je 3:17](#); [Ro 11:12, 15](#)).⁵

⁵Jamieson, R., Fausset, A. R., & Brown, D. (1997). A commentary, critical and explanatory, on the Old and New Testaments. On spine: Critical and explanatory commentary. (Eze 42:16-20). Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

Ezekiel 42:17

He measured the north side, five hundred reeds, with the measuring reed round about.

Ezekiel 42:18

He measured the south side, five hundred reeds, with the measuring reed.

Ezekiel 42:19

He turned about to the west side, *and* measured five hundred reeds with the measuring reed.

Ezekiel 42:20

He measured it by the four sides: it had a wall round about, five hundred *reeds* long, and five hundred broad, to make a separation between the sanctuary and the profane place.

Missler: Too large for Mt Moriah (Solomon's and Zerubbabel's Temple). Change in Topography (Zechariah 14:9-11).

Angel in Revelation measures the walls of New Jerusalem in the SAME order (Revelation 21:13).

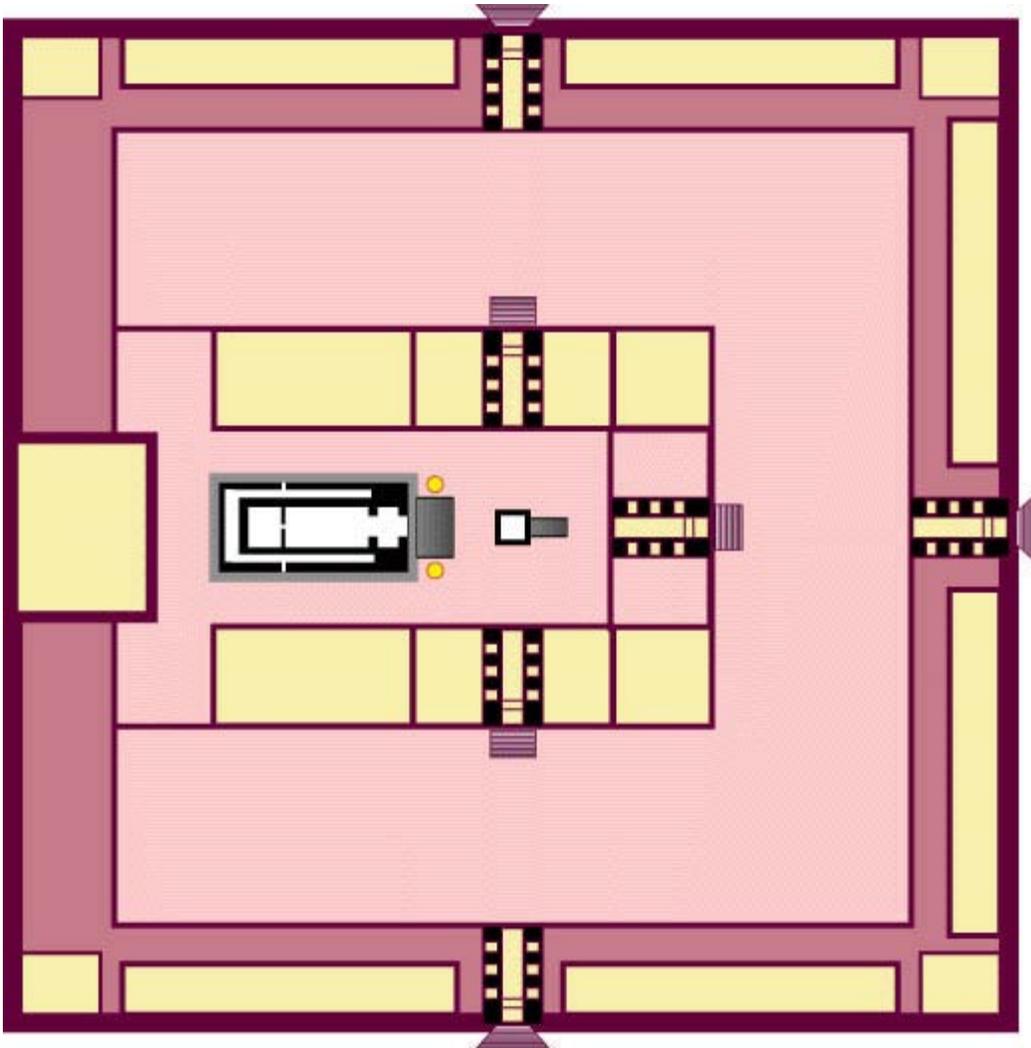
Now this is an interesting parallel to Revelation 11:1-2 that we read a few moments ago.

[to make a separation between the sanctuary and the profane place] If the measurement is 500 reeds instead of 500 cubits as it seems to be here, then the reference is to a place separate from the 500-cubit square and wall of Ezekiel 40-41. The purpose of such a large square of 5,250 feet (besides the one of 875 feet) would be to have a profane place which could be used by the people coming to the sanctuary itself—the 500-cubit enclosure. It is called "profane," meaning for common uses of man instead of purely sacred or divine uses. If this is the case, then there were 4 main squares in the whole picture here:

1. The 500-reed (5,250 feet) square and the wall around it (Ezekiel 42:14-20).
2. The 500-cubit (875 feet) square, or the sanctuary area and its wall (Ezekiel 40:19,23,27).
3. The 300-cubit square and its wall (Ezekiel 40:27). See drawing in map section.
4. The 100-cubit square and its wall—the place containing the altar in the very center of all the 4 squares (Ezekiel 40:47).

On the west side of 2 of these squares were built the temple (note, Ezekiel 41:10) and the other building for general use (see The Separate Place.

wall ... separation between ... sanctuary and ... profane—No longer shall the wall of partition be to separate the Jew and the Gentile ([Eph 2:14](#)), but to separate the sacred from the profane. The lowness of it renders it unfit for the purpose of defense (the object of the wall, [Rev 21:12](#)). But its square form (as in the city, [Rev 21:16](#)) is the emblem of the kingdom that cannot be shaken ([Heb 12:28](#)), resting on prophets and apostles, Jesus Christ being the chief corner-stone.⁶



⁶Jamieson, R., Fausset, A. R., & Brown, D. (1997). A commentary, critical and explanatory, on the Old and New Testaments. On spine: Critical and explanatory commentary. (Eze 42:20-43:1). Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

Missler: Chuck Missler KHouse Ministries Commentary on Ezekiel

JSB: The Jewish Study bible, Jewish Publication society Tanakh Translation,
Adele Berlin and Marc Zvi Brettler – Editors, Michael fishbane – Consulting Deitor