

Ezekiel Chapter 40

Beginning (in chapter 40), and going through to the end of the book, and clearly a unit. They spell out the construction of a new temple and a new order of worship for Israel. Much discussion has been engendered as to the identity of the temple described in these chapters. The suggestions include the following?

- (1) It is an ideal temple that was never built, or perhaps a rebuilding of Solomon's temple. The measurements of this temple however, do not fit those of Solomon's temple. Also, the motivation for revealing nine chapters about a temple never to be built is not apparent.
- (2) It is Zerubbabel's temple. However, it was nothing like the glorious temple envisioned by Ezekiel.
- (3) It is a figurative representation of the church. This view is taken by amillennial scholars, who view all kingdom prophecies in the Old Testament as harbingers of the New Testament church, which is said to be God's kingdom. This view is inconsistent, since it takes Ezekiel's earlier prophecies, the ones that have been fulfilled, as literal, but the present prophecy of a rebuilt temple as figurative.
- (4) It is a literal temple yet to be built. In favor of this view is the fact that the measurements of the temple given in these chapters do not fit any temple or tabernacle mentioned in Scripture. It therefore awaits fulfillment which can take place only in the time of Israel's blessing and restoration during the millennial reign of Christ as given (in Revelation 20:4-6).

Starting (in chapter 40 to 42), we see the new temple includes the traditional outer court (40:5-27); and inner court (40:28-47); as well as the building proper (40:48 - 41:26); adjacent building (42:1-14); outer walls (42:15-20); and altar (43:13-27).

The fact that Ezekiel would spend so much space describing the temple indicates its importance. Actually, upwards of 50 chapters in the bible are devoted to descriptions of the tabernacle and various temples. In the Book of Ezekiel, the prophet shows clearly that the tragic departure of God's glory from the temple, described (in chapters 10 and 11), is reversed in the future temple when the Spirit returns (43:1-12), and fills it with glory. God is not finished with His people. They will yet see His glory.

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."

This is the twenty fifth year of the captivity in Babylon (or 573 B.C.). The 10th day was the start of preparations for Passover.

The city spoken of here, that was smitten, was of course, Jerusalem. The hand of the Lord took Ezekiel to the place of his vision.

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."

We must remember that Ezekiel had been in Babylon. This vision is in Jerusalem, or nearby. The mountain, spoken of, is speaking, possibly, of one of the mountains in the Jerusalem area and could be Mt. Zion which is approximately 3280 feet tall.

This area is about 2000 feet above the Mediterranean Sea. It is even higher than that, above the Dead Sea, which is the lowest place on earth. The frame of the city seemed to be south of where Ezekiel was looking.

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."

An angel conducted a tour of all the details shown to the prophet, appearing in the form of a man appearing like bright, gleaming bronze.

He could be understood as the Angel of the Lord since he is called "Lord" as you will see when we come to (44:2).

His "line of flax" was for larger measurements, the "rod" for shorter ones. (Rev. 11:1; 21:5). God measured what belongs to Him.

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 show thee; for to the intent that I might show [them] unto thee [art] thou brought hither: declare all that thou seest to the house of Israel."

Whoever this figure of a man is (possibly Jesus), is warning Ezekiel to not see with his eyes and not see, or hear with his ears and not hear. He is warned to not only look at these things, but look carefully and retain what he sees. He is also, cautioning Ezekiel to hear every Word correctly, and retain every Word he hears. Ezekiel is to carry this message to those Israelites in captivity. The message is really for Israel.

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 a handbreadth: so he measured the breadth of the building, one reed; and the height, one reed."

We are now, looking at the wall on the outside of the house which in reality is the temple. This outer wall is later described as a separation of the holy areas.

This could not be the heavenly temple since Ezekiel was taken to Israel to see it (verse 2). It could not be Zerubbabel's temple since the glory of God was not present then. It could not be the eternal temple since the Lord and the Lamb are its temple. Therefore, it must be the earthly millennial temple built with all of the exquisite details that are yet to be outlined.

Measuring reed of six cubits long ... a handbreadth: The rod extended 6 royal cubits of 21 inches for a total of 10.5 feet, each cubit being made up of a standard width of 18 inches and a handbreadth of 3 inches.

Ezekiel 40:6-7 "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." "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."

The buildings of the East gate are first because this will be in the direct line of approach to the temple. Each opening was 10.5 feet across. Chambers (rooms), in the wall are 10.5 x 10.5 feet. Precise measurements describe a literal temple, not a symbolic one.

Ezekiel 40:8 "He measured also the porch of the gate within, one reed."

The inside porch was 10.5 feet.

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."

The porch was 8 cubits or 12 feet. The porch then was, 9 or 10 feet wide and 12 feet long. We know that there were at least two posts, because it is plural. Each of them were 3 ft. We do not know, whether these posts are round or square.

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."

The chambers described here are accommodations for the ministering priest and temple officers who care for the temple.

Ezekiel 40:11 "And he measured the breadth of the entry of the gate, ten cubits; [and] the length of the gate, thirteen cubits."

This entry is 15 feet wide, and the length was 19 1/2 feet.

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."

These areas in front of the chambers were 1.5 feet on each side and the little chambers were 9 ft. by 9 ft.

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."

This gate area from door to door was 37 1/2 feet long.

Ezekiel 40:14 "He made also posts of threescore cubits, even unto the post of the court round about the gate."

These posts would have been 90 feet long.

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."

This area is speaking of being 75 feet across.

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."

Since they had no glass, there are lattices. On each post ... palm trees: These depict God's desire for fruit in Israel. Palms are symbols of beauty, salvation and triumph. Palms are on the inner court's gateposts as well (verse 31).

Verses 17-37: Show a further blueprint for the temple areas, with more precise measurements. The numbers 5, 25, 50 and 100 are frequently used. The sanctuary formed a square of some 500 cubits.

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."

These 30 chambers were in another area in the outer court, not close to the other 6, which were in the inner court. This court is farthest out from the temple proper and enclosed by the outer walls.

Ezekiel 40:18 "And the pavement by the side of the gates over against the length of the gates [was] the lower pavement."

The pavement seemed to go to these thirty rooms. Possibly on the outside and would have been on the floor level.

Ezekiel 40:19 "Then he measured the breadth from the forefront of the lower gate unto the forefront of the inner court without, a hundred cubits eastward and northward."

This area was 150 feet each direction.

Ezekiel 40:20-21 "And the gate of the outward court that looked toward the north, he measured the length thereof, and the breadth thereof." "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."

This area was 75 feet long and 37 1/2 feet wide. Each of the 6 chambers were the size of a small bedroom.

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."

These palm trees were, probably, speaking of the posts engraved with palm trees. The entrance was an archway. This area was elevated up from the floor 7 steps.

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 a hundred cubits."

The outside dimension of this inner court is 150 feet square.

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."

It seems as if these measurements are for areas inside the big area of the inner court. This south gate is specifically mentioned, here.

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."

This was the inside of the bigger area, which was 150 feet square. This area is 75 feet square by 37 1/2 feet. The 150 feet square is speaking of the inner court. This other measurement is like an inner court within the inner court.

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."

This is speaking of another floor, seven steps above the one previously mentioned. The decorations were the same as before.

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 a hundred cubits."

Each of these gates are part of that 150 foot by 150 foot enclosure.

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;"

All of the outside walls were the same 150 feet long.

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."

The chamber area took up an area of 75 feet by 37 1/2 feet. The windows were in the little apartments. Each had an archway.

Ezekiel 40:30 "And the arches round about [were] five and twenty cubits long, and five cubits broad."

The arches took up 37 1/2 feet in length and were 7 1/2 feet wide.

Ezekiel 40:31 "And the arches thereof [were] toward the outer court; and palm trees [were] upon the posts thereof: and the going up to it [had] eight steps."

This floor is a little higher than the outer court, and took 8 steps to reach. The decorations were on all of the posts. The entrance was from the outer court.

Ezekiel 40:32 "And he brought me into the inner court toward the east: and he measured the gate according to these measures."

He is going from gate to gate on each level. Always, the east gate is looking to the east, as most of our churches do. This gate is facing the early morning light.

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."

On this floor, as well, the chambers, the posts, and arches took up 75 feet by 37 1/2 feet. Each chamber had a window.

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."

This is still at the east gate of the inner court. The doors opened outward.

Ezekiel 40:35 "And he brought me to the north gate, and measured [it] according to these measures;"

Each time they go to a new level, they go to the east, and to the north gate.

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."

This again, is speaking of the chambers, and the posts, and the arches taking up an area, 75 feet by 37 1/2 feet. As we said, it is the same at each gate.

Ezekiel 40:37 "And the posts thereof [were] toward the outer 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."

The eight steps just tell us that this is on the same level, as the eastern gate (of verse 32).

Verses 38 to 47: Describes "chambers" for the priests, and raises the question of sacrifices in the millennial kingdom. They will exist as (verses 39-43 indicate), but will be no more efficacious than they were in Old Testament times. No sacrifice before or after Christ saves. They only point to Him as the one true Lamb who takes away sin.

The Lord's Supper is a memorial that looks back to Calvary and in no way diminishes the cross. Israel rejected their Messiah, but when they have received Him and are in His kingdom, they will have a memorial of sacrifices that point to Him. They will have missed the memorial of the Lord's Supper, but will then have their own memorial sacrifices for 1,000 years.

Ezekiel 40:38 "And the chambers and the entries thereof [were] by the posts of the gates, where they washed the burnt offering."

These chambers, where the priests stayed, were near the place of the offering of the burnt offering. Each offering must be washed, before it was acceptable for sacrifice. This symbolically means that what we offer to God must be clean.

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."

These four tables were just outside on the porch, where the animals were slain. Until the time of Jesus' sacrifice, sacrifice would go on in the temple. All of these sacrifices symbolized something that Jesus fulfilled for us on the cross. The burnt offering symbolizes the giving of all to God. Perhaps, the resuming of the sacrifice in the temple, is telling us that our salvation must continue, and not stop after we are saved.

We must not stop living for God, but continue on in the salvation He provided for us. It does not mean that there is another sacrifice for the Christian. We are just to continue in our walk with God, after we have begun. Jesus gave His body on the cross to abolish sin for the Christian. We must however, remember His great sacrifice, and continue in the salvation we receive.

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."

This is just saying, there were 4 tables at this location as well.

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]."

Four tables are on either side of the inner court's North gate, used for commemorating the death of Christ by slaying burnt, sin, and trespass offerings.

Ezekiel 40:42 And the four tables [were] of hewn stone for the burnt offering, of a cubit and a half long, and a cubit and a half broad, and one cubit high: whereupon also they laid the instruments wherewith they slew the burnt offering and the sacrifice.

These were made, not of wood, but stone. Each table was 2 1/4 feet long and 2 1/4 feet wide. They were 1 1/2 feet high. These were like chop blocks. The instruments were laid on the table also.

Ezekiel 40:43 "And within [were] hooks, a hand broad, fastened round about: and upon the tables [was] the flesh of the offering."

Hooks means a two pronged hook for flaying animals on. It also means a stall. A stall just about 3.648 inches wide would not be wide enough to put an animal in. I believe this is speaking of a hook attached to the wall to hang them on. The hand broad is speaking of 3.648 inches. Hand breadth is the width of the palm of the hand. It would have to be big like this to be strong enough to hold a heavy animal.

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."

Provision is made for the praises of the redeemed in music.

It appears that the singers had chambers. They were located near the inner gate. They were at the side of the north gate. They looked south. The song leader was near the east gate looking north.

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 seems they were in charge of seeing that the tasks were properly done.

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."

“Sons of Zadok”: Proper names tie the vision to historical reality, calling for literal interpretation. This Levitical family descended from Levi, Aaron, Eleazar and Phinehas. In accord with God’s covenant with Phinehas, and because of Eli’s unfaithfulness and Zadok’s faithfulness to David and Solomon, Zadok’s sons serve as priests in the millennial temple.

Ezekiel 40:47 "So he measured the court, a hundred cubits long, and a hundred cubits broad, foursquare; and the altar [that was] before the house."

This court is 150 feet square. The altar was just a part of this area and where offerings occur.

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."

The posts of the porch were 7 1/2 feet wide each. The entrance was like two doors of 4 1/2 feet wide each.

Porch refers to the temple porch and is similar to that of Solomon’s temple.

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."

The porch was 30 feet in length by 16 1/2 feet wide. There was a pillar on each side of the entrance.

Ezekiel Chapter 40 Questions

1. What year did this vision come to Ezekiel?
2. How did Ezekiel go to the place of his vision?
3. Where did God take Ezekiel to, for the vision?
4. The altitude of the mountains were about _____ feet above sea level.
5. "Brass" symbolizes what?
6. Many times, the description of the glorified Christ includes feet of _____.
7. What was the reed like?
8. What does God say to Ezekiel in verse 4?
9. Who is this message sent to?

10. How wide is the wall?
11. How big was each chamber?
12. The posts were engraved with _____.
13. These chambers were like what?
14. Verse 19 says the area was _____ feet each direction.
15. When they go up seven steps, what is it telling us?
16. Most churches face the _____.
17. How much area does each set of arches, gates, and chambers take up?
18. Who were the chambers for?
19. Why were the chambers close to the burnt offering area?
20. Why did they need tables?
21. What does the burnt offering symbolize?
22. What were the tables made of?
23. How big were the tables?
24. How wide is a hand broad?
25. What were the hooks used for?
26. What are the priests called in verse 44?
27. Who was "Zadok"?
28. What was the difference in the two groups of priests?
29. Describe the front porch.