

Message #44

Ezekiel 40:1-47

The book of Ezekiel is going to end on a “glorious note.” Israel is in her land. Israel is blessed by God in her land. Israel is worshipping in her Temple and God is actually there in Person.

We come now to one of the most significant portions of Scripture in the entire Bible. What is described in these last nine chapters of Ezekiel is the Millennial Temple and the worship that will take place in it plus the distribution of the land for Israel.

Now this section of Scripture has been explained in different ways:

- 1) Some suggest that this is a description of Solomon’s temple before it was destroyed in 586 B.C.. But when one compares the description of this temple with Solomon’s temple in Kings and Chronicles, that is not possible.
- 2) Some suggest this is a description of the restoration of the Temple that took place in the 6th century, after the Babylonian captivity. This is not possible because the description and the dimensions do not fit. The people who rebuilt the temple did not follow the specs found in these chapters.
- 3) Some suggest this describes an ideal temple which really won’t be built. This makes no sense at all in view of the precise details that are given about the Temple. Ezekiel’s prophecies are all very precise concerning individuals, nations and the Temple.
- 4) Some suggest that this is a prophetic picture of the Church, not a literal Temple. This makes no sense because this prophecy is about Israel (**40:4**) and not about the church. Furthermore, the words Ezekiel uses are very precise and very literal, not symbolic.
- 5) Some suggest this is a picture of a real Temple that will exist during the Millennium, when Jesus Christ reigns on this earth in Jerusalem. This is the true interpretation.

God promised Israel that He would rebuild His Sanctuary when He entered into a peace relationship again with Israel (**Ezek. 37:26-28**). **This temple is not for church worship; this temple is for Israel’s worship.** We certainly will want to see this place, but we will not worship in this place.

Now the Temple has been and still is a sacred place. Even that wall that stands in Jerusalem is considered sacred because it reminds Israel of the presence of God. It stands to reason that when God is once again blessing Israel, that Temple will be critical to a visible statement of the presence of God.

Now the introduction to this section begins in **Ezekiel 40:1-4**. According to **verse 1**, on the exact day, 25 years later, that Israel had been taken captive by the Babylonians, and 14 years after the city of Jerusalem had fallen, God took Ezekiel back to Jerusalem to see the future Temple. It is clear that this temple is not standing now; all that is standing is a wall.

There will be a Tribulation Temple that will be authorized by the Antichrist.

There will be a Millennial Temple that will be authorized by Jesus Christ.

This is what Ezekiel sees here.

This temple will have seven tribes of Israel to the north of it—Dan, Asher, Naphtali, Manasseh, Ephraim, Reuben, Judah (Ezek. 48:1-7) and five tribes of Israel to the south of it—Benjamin, Simeon, Issachar, Zebulun, Gad (Ezek. 48:23-29). It will sit right in the middle of the sacred spot in the land (48:8).

In **verse 2**, God took Ezekiel to a high mountain in the land of Israel so he could see all the buildings of the city of Jerusalem to the south. Probably this was Mt. Zion. **God took Ezekiel there to show him a Temple that will be there one day in the future.**

According to **verse 3**, when God took him there, Ezekiel saw a man whose appearance was like bronze who was standing in the gateway to the city with a linen cord and a measuring rod in his hand. When we see a measuring rod, it means God is going to do something very specific for His earthly people.

In **verse 4**, the man said to Ezekiel, “you pay close attention to what you see and hear and to what I will show you and then you go and declare it to Israel.” What Ezekiel sees and what he is to declare is this:

EZEKIEL IS GIVEN A PRECISE VISION OF THE PRECISE DIMENSIONS OF THE OUTER AND INNER COURT OF THE TEMPLE THAT WILL BE IN JERUSALEM AFTER ISRAEL IS RESTORED AND HIS RESPONSIBILITY IS TO DECLARE THIS TO ISRAEL.

There is truth in the Bible that relates to the church and there is truth in the Bible that relates to Israel. This is aimed straight at Israel. Now the measurements are very precise, so this is not symbolic language. There will come a day when that Temple will be standing in Jerusalem with these precise measurements.

There are six areas of the Temple described and measured in these verses:

MEASUREMENT #1 – The east gate that leads to the outer court of the Temple. **40:5-16**

Verse 5 begins with a measurement of the outer wall. This is the first thing he sees. Walls have a purpose and that purpose is you mark off a territory and do not make it easy access. This wall is a major obstacle to just walking into the Temple. The wall surrounded the entire Temple complex. According to **Ezekiel 42:20**, the wall was 500 cubits (875 feet) square surrounding the Temple.

The measuring rod that was used to measure was a cubit (18 inches) and a “hand breadth” (3 inches). So the measuring rod being used here breaks down into about 21 inches per cubit. Now the rod was six of these in length, which means the measuring rod was 6 x 21 inches which equals 126 inches, which is 10 ½ feet long. At the end of **verse 5** we learn that the width of the wall and the height of the wall was about 10 ½ feet. This would be a “formidable obstacle” to easy access.

Now according to **verse 6**, the man went to the gate that faced east and he climbed up seven (**vrs. 22, 26**) steps before one could even get to the gate. Once he got to the gate he measured the threshold of the gate and that also was 10 ½ feet deep. A threshold is a point of entry so when one got to the top of the stairs there was about a 10 ½ foot walk to the first guard station.

This east gate was an important gate and one of three gates that would give access into the Temple area. There is a gate on the east side, north side and south side, but no gate on the west side. **The east gate will be the gate through which the Lord will enter. Once the glory of God enters, this gate will be forever closed (Ezek. 44:2).**

According to **verse 7**, there were guard rooms inside the gates that were 10 ½ feet long and 10 ½ feet wide. The guard rooms were separated by walls that were 5 cubits apart, which means they were 105 inches thick, which is about 8 ¾ feet thick. There were six of these guardrooms with three on each side. The distance from the first guardroom to the gate was 10 ½ feet.

Now what is very clear from just this part of this is that this is not some easy access place. This will be a place of high and heavy security. You don't enter this place lightly. This is a very sacred place and you don't just walk in until approved by the guards. This Temple will be like a mighty, sacred fortress.

Now once one goes past the guard stations, one reaches a porch. According to **verse 8** the porch facing inward toward the Temple was 10 ½ feet. So one walks through the gate threshold by the guard stations and comes to another threshold and then enters a rectangular room.

According to **verse 9**, he measured the porch of each gate which is 8 cubits, which is 168 inches or 14 feet. He also measured the side of the pillars which is two cubits or 42 inches or 3.5 feet wide. These porches are like halls and vestibules that open to the outer court.

In **verse 10** we learn that when you go in there are three guardrooms on each side as one enters through a gate.

Now in verses 11-15, the guide returns to the front of the gate.

According to **verse 11**, the width of the gateway is 10 cubits or 210 inches or 17.5 feet and the length of the gate is 13 cubits or 273 inches or 22 ¾ feet.

According to **verse 12**, each guard room had a barrier wall in front of it that was 21 inches on each side and the guardrooms were 126 inches square, which is 10.5 square feet of living space (**verse 12**).

Now according to **verse 13** he took a measurement of the roof. The total distance of the roof that covers one guardroom to the other is 25 cubits or 525 inches or 43.75 feet.

According to **verse 14** there were several side pillars that went all around the courtyard that stood 60 cubits high, which is 1260 inches or 105 feet high.

From the front of the entrance gate to the front of the inner porch gate was a distance of 50 cubits or 1050 inches or 87.5 feet (**verse 15**).

There are shuttered windows looking toward the guardrooms and toward their side pillars within the gate and these windows had palm trees along the walls (**verse 16**).

MEASUREMENT #2 – The measurement of the outer court of the Temple. **40:17-27**

According to **verse 17** Ezekiel was brought to the outer court and he saw pavement all around the court with thirty rooms along the pavement.

The rooms are probably placed in the north, east and south walls, with ten on each side. From 42:6 we assume that these were pillared porticoes used by worshippers during events taking place inside. This was apparently a walkway that featured various rooms, sitting on columns.

According to **verses 18-19** the distance between the inside of the lower gateway at the east entrance to the outside of the inner court was 100 cubits, which is 2100 inches, which is 175 feet.

In **verses 20-27**, Ezekiel is led to the outer north gate (**40:20-23**) and the outer south gate (**40:24-27**) and the dimensions are identical. The windows and porches had palm tree ornaments (**v. 22**), symbolizing this is a place of God's beauty and blessing. So all of these gate entrances are identical.

MEASUREMENT #3 – The measurement of the inner court of the Temple. **40:28-37**

Now leaving the outer gates, the guide directs the prophet through different gateways that lead to the inner court. There is an inner court wall that apparently separates the inner court from the outer court.

After the outer court is measured, the inner court is measured. Within this area priests perform their duties. The man went from the south gate and measured the south gate according to the same measurements and they were identical (**v. 28**). According to **verses 28-37**, the south gate, east gate and the north gate were identical. There are three entrances in each with 8 steps, not 7 (**v. 33, 37**).

So there were three gates leading into the Temple area; the only difference is those gates faced the outer court, not the inner court. The gates are directly opposite of the other gates and the distance between them is 100 cubits or 175 feet (**v. 27**).

MEASUREMENT #4 – The measurement of the tables for offerings. **40:38-43**

At the sides of the inner court gates were wash bowls (**v. 38**). In the porch area of each gate were two tables on each side where burnt offerings and guilt offerings were offered (**v. 39**). On the north gate on the outer side were two tables and on the inner side were two tables (**v. 40**). So a total of four tables on each side for a total of 8 tables for the offerings (**v. 41**).

Verses 42-43 indicate that there will be four tables on which they will lay their instruments and hooks where they hang their offerings.

The Lord, Himself, will be present which means the Lord's Supper will no longer be operative and Israel will be forced to realize that it was the shed blood of Jesus Christ that saved her. These will be memorial sacrifices that will point to the supreme sacrifice that was made by Jesus Christ, which Israel rejected.

Every time an Israelite brings an animal sacrifice to the altar, they will feel the shame for their sin. In all reality, Israel rejected the sacrifice of Christ for 2000 years so if God makes them remember this for 1000 years, it is of grace.

MEASUREMENT #5 – The measurement of the chambers for the inner court. **40:44-47**

Ezekiel passes through the northern gateway of the inner wall into the inner court area and he notices different chambers that are opposite each other. According to **verse 44** as Ezekiel entered the inner court, he noticed two rooms, one at the side of the north gate facing south and one at the side of the south gate facing north. These were rooms for singers who worship and praise God. This is the room for the choir. There will be singing at worship services done by very skilled singers.

According to **verse 45**, the south facing room is for the priests in charge of the Temple.

According to **verse 46**, the north facing room is for the priests in charge of the altar.

Now the Hebrew "keep charge," which occurs in **verses 45-46**, typically have to do with some form of "military guard duty." These priests will carefully guard what is going on in this Temple as some military. They will defend the sanctity of what is happening here.

It is very right and very Biblical to protect and defend the sanctity of what takes place in the Sanctuary.

The inner court was measured (**v. 47**) and was a perfect square 100 cubits long and 100 cubits wide, which is 2100 inches square or 175 square feet.

MEASUREMENT #6 – The measurement of the porch of the temple. **40:48-49**

Now the man with the measuring rod moves to the foreroom or vestibule of the Temple.

There are side pillars that apparently support the porch which are 5 cubits (8.75 feet) wide, and the gate is 3 cubits (5.25) feet.

This porch or vestibule is rectangular in shape; it is 20 cubits wide (35 feet) and 11 cubits long (19.25 feet).

What is purpose:

- 1) To demonstrate God's Majestic Holiness by a sacred Place. 42:14; 43:7a
- 2) To have a place on earth where God's Glory continually dwells. 43:7b
- 3) To have a special place for God; Israel. 43:7c
- 4) To honor Jesus Christ as God. 44:2