
EZEKIEL 40: 1 In the twenty-fifth 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 struck, in the same day, the hand of the LORD was on me, and he brought me there.

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, Eze 40:1-5. We have next a description of the east gate, Eze 40:6-19, the north gate, Eze 40:20-22, and the south gate, Eze 40:24-31. A farther description of the east gate, Eze 40:32-34, and of the north gate, Eze 40:35-38. Account of the eight tables, Eze 40:39-43; of the chambers, Eze 40:44-47; and of the porch of the temple, Eze 40:48, Eze 40:49.

A New Plan of the Temple at Jerusalem

For an explanation of this plan, and of the accompanying map of the division of the Land of Canaan, see the notes at end of Ezekiel 48.

Verse 1

In the five and twentieth year of our captivity - According to the date here given, this prophecy was delivered on Tuesday, April 20, A.M. 3430, in the twenty-fifth year of the captivity of Jeconiah, and fourteen years after the taking of Jerusalem.

The temple here described by Ezekiel is, in all probability, the same which he saw before his captivity, and which had been burned by the Chaldeans fourteen years before this vision. On comparing the Books of Kings and Chronicles with this prophet, we shall find the same dimensions in the parts described by both; for instance, the temple, or place which comprehended the sanctuary, the holy place, and the vestibule or porch before the temple, is found to measure equally the same both in Ezekiel and the Kings. Compare 1Kgs 6:3-16, with Eze 41:2, etc. The inside ornaments of the temple are entirely the same; in both we see two courts; an inner one for the priests, and an outer one for the people. Compare 1Kgs 6:29-36; 2Chr 4:9; and Eze 41:16, Eze 41:17, and Eze 48:7-10. So that there is room to suppose that, in all the rest, the temple of Ezekiel resembled the old one; and that God's design in retracing these ideas in the prophet's memory was to preserve the

remembrance of the plan, the dimensions, the ornaments, and whole structure of this Divine edifice; and that at the return from captivity the people might more easily repair it, agreeably to this model. The prophet's applying himself to describe this edifice was a motive of hope to the Jews of seeing themselves one day delivered from captivity, the temple rebuilt, and their nation restored to its ancient inheritance. Ezekiel touches very slightly upon the description of the temple or house of the Lord, which comprehended the holy place or sanctuary, and which are so exactly described in the Books of Kings. He dwells more largely upon the gates, the galleries, and apartments, of the temple, concerning which the history of the kings had not spoken, or only just taken notice of by the way.

This is the judgment of Calmet; and although every Biblical critic is of the same opinion, yet more labor is spent on rebuilding this temple of Ezekiel than was spent on that built by Solomon! The Jesuits, Prada and Villalpand, have given three folio volumes on this temple, with abundance of cuts, where the different parts are exhibited after the finest models of Grecian and Roman architecture! But still the building is incomplete. Now, of what consequence is all this to the Christian, or to any other reader? I confess I see not. While, then, we have the exact dimensions and accurate description in 1 Kings and 2 Chronicles, of that built by Solomon, in imitation of which this plan by Ezekiel was drawn, we need not be very solicitous about the manner of measuring and describing used by the prophet; as, when we have labored through the whole, we have only the measurements and description of that built by Solomon, and delineated by a hand not less faithful in the First Book of Kings, Eze 6:1-14, and 2 Chronicles 2, 3, 4, 2Chr 5:1-14 and 6.

As the prophet knew that the Chaldeans had utterly destroyed the temple, he thought it necessary to preserve an exact description of it, that on their restoration the people might build one on the same model. As to allegorical meanings relative to this temple, I can say nothing: God has given no data by which any thing of this kind can be known or applied; and as to those who have labored in this way, perhaps "Solomon's Temple Spiritualized, by John Bunyan," is equally good with their well-intended inventions. Those who wish to enter much into the particulars of this temple must have recourse to the more voluminous expositors, who on this subject seem to have thought that they could never say enough. See also the accompanying map.

EZEKIEL 40: 2 In the visions of God brought he me into the land of Israel, and set me down on a very high mountain, whereon was as it were the frame of a city on the south.

Verse 2

Set me upon a very high mountain - Mount Moriah, the mount on which Solomon's temple was built, 2Chr 3:1.

EZEKIEL 40: 3 He brought me there; 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.

Verse 3

A man, whose appearance was like - brass - Like bright polished brass, which strongly reflected the rays of light. Probably he had what we would term a nimbus or glory round his head. This was either an angel; or, as some think, a personal appearance of our blessed Lord.

EZEKIEL 40: 4 The man said to me, Son of man, see with your eyes, and hear with your ears, and set your heart on all that I shall show you; for, to the intent that I may show them to you, you are brought here: declare all that you see to the house of Israel.

Verse 4

Declare all that thou seest to the house of Israel - That they may know how to build the second temple, when they shall be restored from their captivity.

EZEKIEL 40: 5 Behold, a wall on the outside of the house all around, and in the man's hand a measuring reed six cubits long, of a cubit and a hand breadth each: so he measured the thickness of the building, one reed; and the height, one reed.

Verse 5

A measuring reed of six cubits long - The Hebrew cubit is supposed to be about twenty and a half inches; and a palm, about three inches more; the length of the rod about ten feet six inches.

The breadth - one reed; and the height, one reed - As this wall was as broad as it was high, it must have been a kind of parapet, which was carried, of the same dimensions, all round the temple. See AAAA in the plan.

EZEKIEL 40: 6 Then came he to the gate which looks toward the east, and went up its steps: and he measured the threshold of the gate, one reed broad; and the other threshold, one reed broad.

Verse 6

Went up the stairs thereof - As the temple was built upon an eminence, there must have been steps on the outside, opposite to each door, to ascend by. And it appears there were steps to go up from one court to another, see Eze 40:22, Eze 40:26, Eze 40:34, Eze 40:37; and also from the court of the priests to the sanctuary, Eze 40:49. See MMMMM in the plan.

EZEKIEL 40: 7 Every lodge was one reed long, and one reed broad; and between the lodges was five cubits; and the threshold of the gate by the porch of the gate toward the house was one reed.

Verse 7

And every little chamber was one reed - These were the chambers of the buildings which were within the inclosure of the temple round the court, and these chambers appear to have been numerous. See the map, which has been carefully copied from that of Calmet.

EZEKIEL 40: 8 He measured also the porch of the gate toward the house, one reed.

EZEKIEL 40: 9 Then measured he the porch of the gate, eight cubits; and its posts, two cubits; and the porch of the gate was toward the house.

Verse 9

The porch of the gate - See account of the gates in the plan.

EZEKIEL 40: 10 The lodges 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.

EZEKIEL 40: 11 He measured the breadth of the opening of the gate, ten cubits; and the length of the gate, thirteen cubits;

EZEKIEL 40: 12 and a border before the lodges, one cubit on this side, and a border, one cubit on that side; and the lodges, six cubits on this side, and six cubits on that side.

EZEKIEL 40: 13 He measured the gate from the roof of the one lodge to the roof of the other, a breadth of twenty-five cubits; door against door.

EZEKIEL 40: 14 He made also posts, sixty cubits; and the court reached to the posts, around the gate.

EZEKIEL 40: 15 From the forefront of the gate at the entrance to the forefront of the inner porch of the gate were fifty cubits.

Verse 15

Fifty cubits - The length of the building. See MMMMM in the plan.

EZEKIEL 40: 16 There were closed windows to the lodges, and to their posts within the gate all around, and likewise to the arches; and windows were around inward; and on each post were palm trees.

EZEKIEL 40: 17 Then brought he me into the outer court; and behold, there were rooms and a pavement, made for the court all around: thirty rooms were on the pavement.

Verse 17

The outward court - This was the court of the people.

EZEKIEL 40: 18 The pavement was by the side of the gates, answerable to the length of the gates, even the lower pavement.

EZEKIEL 40: 19 Then he measured the breadth from the forefront of the lower gate to the forefront of the inner court outside, one hundred cubits, both on the east and on the north.

EZEKIEL 40: 20 The gate of the outer court whose prospect is toward the north, he measured its length and its breadth.

EZEKIEL 40: 21 The lodges of it were three on this side and three on that side; and its posts and its arches were after the measure of the first gate: its length was fifty cubits, and the breadth twenty-five cubits.

Verse 21

And the little chambers thereof were three, etc. - See the plan.

Arches - Porch. The arch was not known at this period.

EZEKIEL 40: 22 The windows of it, and its arches, and the palm trees of it, were after the measure of the gate whose prospect is toward the east; and they went up to it by seven steps; and its arches were before them.

EZEKIEL 40: 23 There was a gate to the inner court facing the other gate, on the north and on the east; and he measured from gate to gate one hundred cubits.

EZEKIEL 40: 24 He led me toward the south; and behold, a gate toward the south: and he measured its posts and its arches according to these measures.

Verse 24

According to these measures - The same measures that had been used at the eastern court.

EZEKIEL 40: 25 There were windows in it and in its arches all around, like those windows: the length was fifty cubits, and the breadth twenty-five cubits.

EZEKIEL 40: 26 There were seven steps to go up to it, and its arches were before them; and it had palm trees, one on this side, and another on that side, on its posts.

EZEKIEL 40: 27 There was a gate to the inner court toward the south: and he measured from gate to gate toward the south a hundred cubits.

EZEKIEL 40: 28 Then he brought me to the inner court by the south gate: and he measured the south gate according to these measures;

EZEKIEL 40: 29 and its lodges, and its posts, and its arches, according to these measures: and there were windows in it and in its arches all around; it was fifty cubits long, and twenty-five cubits broad.

EZEKIEL 40: 30 There were arches all around, twenty-five cubits long, and five cubits broad.

 Verse 30

And the arches round about were five and twenty cubits long - That the five cubits broad should be read twenty-five is evident from Eze 40:21, Eze 40:25, Eze 40:29, Eze 40:33, and Eze 40:36, The word ועשרים veesrim, twenty, has probably been lost out of the text. Indeed the whole verse is wanting in two of Kennicott's MSS., one of De Rossi's, and one of mine, (Cod. B.) It has been added in the margin of mine by a later hand. It is reported to have been anciently wanting in many MSS.

EZEKIEL 40: 31 The arches of it were toward the outer court; and palm trees were on its posts: and the ascent to it had eight steps.

EZEKIEL 40: 32 He brought me into the inner court toward the east: and he measured the gate according to these measures;

EZEKIEL 40: 33 and its lodges, and its posts, and its arches, according to these measures: and there were windows therein and in its arches all around; it was fifty cubits long, and twenty-five cubits broad.

EZEKIEL 40: 34 The arches of it were toward the outer court; and palm trees were on its posts, on this side, and on that side: and the ascent to it had eight steps.

EZEKIEL 40: 35 He brought me to the north gate: and he measured it according to these measures;

EZEKIEL 40: 36 its lodges, its posts, and its arches: and there were windows therein all around; the length was fifty cubits, and the breadth twenty-five cubits.

EZEKIEL 40: 37 The posts of it were toward the outer court; and palm trees were on its posts, on this side, and on that side: and the ascent to it had eight steps.

EZEKIEL 40: 38 A room with its door was by the posts at the gates; there they washed the burnt offering.

EZEKIEL 40: 39 In the porch of the gate were two tables on this side, and two tables on that side, on which to kill the burnt offering, the sin offering, and the trespass offering.

Verse 39

The porch of the gate - The north gate of the court of the priests. See Q in the plan.

Two tables - Some say of marble. See dddd in the plan.

EZEKIEL 40: 40 On the one side outside, as one goes up to the entry of the gate toward the north, were two tables; and on the other side, which belonged to 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 killed the sacrifices.

Verse 41

Four tables - These were in the porch of the north gate, in the court of the priests: on them they slew, flayed, and cut up the victims. See dddd in the plan.

EZEKIEL 40: 42 There were four tables for the burnt offering, of cut stone, a cubit and a half long, and a cubit and a half broad, and one cubit high; whereupon they laid the instruments with which they killed the burnt offering and the sacrifice.

EZEKIEL 40: 43 The hooks, a hand breadth long, were fastened within all around: and on the tables was the flesh of the offering.

EZEKIEL 40: 44 Outside of the inner gate were rooms for 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.

EZEKIEL 40: 45 He said to me, This room, whose prospect is toward the south, is for the priests, the keepers of the duty of the house;

EZEKIEL 40: 46 and the room whose prospect is toward the north is for the priests, the keepers of the duty of the altar: these are the sons of Zadok, who from among the sons of Levi come near to the LORD to minister to him.

EZEKIEL 40: 47 He measured the court, one hundred cubits long, and a hundred cubits broad, square; and the altar was before the house.

Verse 47

He measured the court - This was the court of the priests. See FFF in the plan.

EZEKIEL 40: 48 Then 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.

Verse 48

Breadth of the gate - It is evident that the gate was a bivalve, or had folding doors. The length of the porch was twenty cubits. Josephus says the vestibule was twenty cubits long and ten broad. Antiq. lib. 8:3, 2.

EZEKIEL 40: 49 The length of the porch was twenty cubits, and the breadth eleven cubits; even by the steps by which they went up to it: and there were pillars by the posts, one on this side, and another on that side.

Verse 49

By the steps - This was a flight of steps that led to the temple; there were eight steps in each flight.
See YY in the plan.