Ezekiel 40

The Measured Temple: God Claims His Dwelling

OBSERVATION · INTERPRETATION · APPLICATION

"These were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so."

Acts 17:11

CHAPTER THEME

Fourteen years after the temple burned, God took Ezekiel on a careful tour of a new one. Every wall, gate and step was measured because God was claiming it as His own. The ruins were not the end of the story — God already had the plans drawn for the place where He would dwell with His people again.

Ed Smith · Started 20 October 2026

Scripture in the text and key-verse cards: King James Version (public domain). Quotations in the notes: New American Standard Bible® (NASB 1995), © The Lockman Foundation; used by permission. Commentary sources: David Guzik, Enduring Word.

00 The Text

EZEKIEL 40 (KJV), MARKED

Gold God — His character & actions | Green Command / instruction | Sky Key repeated word
Rose Sin / warning | Violet Promise / blessing | Amber Time / place / contrast

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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

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.

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.

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

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.

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.

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

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

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.

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.

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

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.

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

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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

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.

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

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.

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

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.

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.

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

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.

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.

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

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.

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.

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.

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.

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

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.

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.

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.

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

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.

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.

Marked in the text

- **v1** the five and twentieth year of our captivity
- **v1** the fourteenth year after that the city was smitten
- **v1** the hand of the LORD was upon me
- **v2** In the visions of God
- **v2** a very high mountain
- **v3** like the appearance of brass
- **v3** gate *(every occurrence)*
- **v4** behold with thine eyes, and hear with thine ears
- **v4** set thine heart upon all that I shall shew thee
- **v4** declare all that thou seest to the house of Israel
- **v5** measured *(every occurrence)*
- **v5** a wall on the outside of the house round about
- **v6** the gate which looketh toward the east
- **v16** palm trees *(every occurrence)*
- **v17** the outward court
- **v22** seven steps
- **v31** had eight steps

- **v38** ⚠ where they washed the burnt offering
- **v39** ⚠ the burnt offering and the sin offering and the trespass offering
- **v44** ★ the chambers of the singers
- **v46** ★ the sons of Zadok
- **v46** ▲ which come near to the LORD to minister unto him
- **v47** ▲ the altar that was before the house
- **v49** 🕐 pillars by the posts

Marks are drawn on the KJV text. Quotations in the notes are from the NASB95, so their wording may differ from the KJV above.

01 Observation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 40:1 (KJV)

[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.

Setting

"In the twenty-fifth year of our exile, at the beginning of the year, on the tenth of the month, in the fourteenth year after the city was taken" (v1) — about 573 BC. Jerusalem has been a ruin for fourteen years. The temple is ashes. The last time Ezekiel saw it in a vision (chapters 8–11), it was full of idols and the glory of God was leaving by the east. Now, after the promises of new hearts, dry bones and a cleansed land (chapters 36–39), "the hand of the LORD was upon me" (v1) one more time — and this vision is about a temple. It runs to the end of the book (chapters 40–48).

Structure

- vv1–4 — **the guide and the charge:** "In the visions of God" Ezekiel is set "on a very high mountain," and to the south is "a structure like a city" (v2). There stands a man "whose appearance was like the appearance of bronze," with "a line of flax and a measuring rod in his hand" (v3). "Son of man, see with your eyes, hear with your ears, and give attention to all that I am going to show you … Declare to the house of Israel all that you see" (v4).
- v5 — **the wall:** "a wall on the outside of the temple all around" (v5), measured with a rod of six long cubits.
- vv6–16 — **the east gate:** "Then he went to the gate which faced east" (v6). Up the steps, through the threshold, past three guardrooms on each side, into the porch. Windows all around, and "palm tree ornaments" on the side pillars (v16).
- vv17–19 — **the outer court:** "Then he brought me into the outer court" (v17); "thirty chambers faced the pavement" (v17). A hundred cubits from the outer gate to the inner one (v19).
- vv20–27 — **the north and south gates:** built to the same measurements as the east gate, "reached by seven steps" (v22; also v26). No west gate is described.

- vv28–37 — **the inner gates:** south, east and north, each matching the outer gates but raised higher — "its stairway had eight steps" (v31; also vv34, 37).
- vv38–43 — **the tables for sacrifice:** a chamber "there they rinse the burnt offering" (v38), and eight tables for slaying "the burnt offering, the sin offering and the guilt offering" (v39), with four tables of hewn stone for the tools (v42).
- vv44–47 — **singers and priests:** "chambers for the singers in the inner court" (v44). One chamber is for the priests who "keep charge of the temple" (v45), another for those over the altar: "the sons of Zadok, who from the sons of Levi come near to the LORD to minister to Him" (v46). The inner court is a hundred cubits square, and "the altar was in front of the temple" (v47).
- vv48–49 — **the porch of the temple:** side pillars, a stairway, and "columns belonging to the side pillars" (v49).

Repeated words

measured (vv5, 6, 8, 9, 11, 13, 19, 20, 23, 24, 27, 28, 32, 35, 47, 48); palm tree ornaments (vv16, 22, 26, 31, 34, 37); brought me (vv1, 2, 3, 17, 28, 32, 35, 48); steps (vv6, 22, 26, 31, 34, 37); gate / gateway (all through the chapter).

Contrasts

the city taken and the temple burned (v1) ⟷ a temple measured out in the visions of God (v2). The glory leaving by the east gate (11:23) ⟷ the tour beginning at the gate which faced east (v6). Seven steps up to the outer gates (v22) ⟷ eight steps up to the inner gates (v31) — the nearer to the altar, the higher. Ezekiel watching (v4) ⟷ the man doing all the measuring (v5). Exile in Babylon (v1) ⟷ the land of Israel (v2).

Chapter theme (my words)

Fourteen years after the temple burned, God took Ezekiel on a careful tour of a new one. Every wall, gate and step was measured because God was claiming it as His own. The ruins were not the end of the story — God already had the plans drawn for the place where He would dwell with His people again.

02 Interpretation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 40:2 (KJV)

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.

The date and the guide (vv1–4)

Guzik notes this is one of the last dated prophecies in the book, more than a decade after the earlier oracles; Morgan, in Guzik: "These visions were given to the prophet some twelve years after the latest of those already considered." If Ezekiel counted by the religious calendar, the tenth of the first month

was the day Israel chose the Passover lamb (Exod 12:3). Clarke, quoted by Guzik, takes the high mountain as "Mount *Moriah*, the mount on which Solomon's temple was built." The bronze man is, in Guzik's view, "likely an angelic being"; Clarke allowed that some see "a personal appearance of our blessed Lord." Guzik observes that the guide's command — see, hear, give attention, declare (v4) — means the details matter; a purely symbolic temple would not need such care. Alexander, in Guzik: "This vision, then, would be an encouragement that the Lord would complete his purposes for the nation."

What is this temple? — the main views

Chapters 40–48 are among the hardest in the Bible, and Christians read them in different ways. Guzik, following Taylor's categories, lists four:

- **Literal prophetic** — a blueprint the returning exiles were meant to build. But Wright, in Guzik: "It does not correspond to the one that was built after the return, nor to Herod's Temple."
- **Symbolic Christian** — a picture of the church, Christ's people as God's temple (1 Cor 3:16; Eph 2:19–22). Feinberg says this view was "favored by the church Fathers and the Reformers," but judges it "entirely too subjective and would mean nothing for either Ezekiel or his contemporaries." Smith, on the other side: "The best approach is to see these chapters as illustrative of spiritual truths."
- **Dispensational** — a real temple in Christ's millennial kingdom on earth.
- **Apocalyptic** — mythic imagery of God's presence. Vawter and Hoppe: "Ezekiel 40–48 replace the conventional prophecies of Ezekiel 33–37 with imagery that is primarily mythic."

Guzik's own view: "the best approach is to regard this temple as real, yet to be fulfilled" — a millennial temple. Many faithful believers instead see the vision fulfilled in Christ and His church and finally in the new creation, where John "saw no temple" because God and the Lamb are its temple (Rev 21:22). Whatever view I hold, the message to the exiles is the same: God has not given up on dwelling with His people.

The measuring (vv5–27)

The rod was about ten feet long, using the long cubit (Taylor: "Ezekiel is using the long cubit for all his measurements"). Wiersbe, in Guzik: "To measure property is symbolic of claiming it for yourself." Poole notes "the standard is not put into his hand" — Ezekiel watches; God sets the measure. The tour starts at the east gate, the very direction the glory left (11:23) and will return (43:1–5). The gates were massive, fortified towers with guardrooms; Vawter and Hoppe: "In antiquity, gates to cities or to important buildings were elaborate structures in their own right." Poole thought the chambers were "for the priests and Levites to lodge in." Wright: "We cannot find a spiritual significance in every measurement, but we note the symmetry of the temple." Guzik notes there is no west gate.

The inner court (vv28–37)

The inner gates sit higher — eight steps instead of seven. Holiness rises as one approaches God's presence. Palm trees, an echo of Solomon's temple (1 Kgs 6:29), decorate every gate.

The sacrifices (vv38–43)

This is the hard question: why animal sacrifices after the cross (Heb 10:10–14)? Guzik answers that Old Covenant sacrifices never took away sin (Heb 10:4); they pointed to Christ. In his view, these offerings

are not a return to atonement by animals but memorials, and "God *does* sanction memorials and ceremonial remembrance of the work of Jesus on the cross" — much as the Lord's Supper does. Feinberg: "Just as the Lord's Supper now detracts not one iota from the glory of the work of Calvary." Block, in Guzik, explains that purification offerings "functioned only to decontaminate sacred objects and places." Alexander adds that other prophets also speak of sacrifices in the coming kingdom (Isa 56:6–7; Jer 33:18; Zech 14:16–21). Those who read the temple symbolically answer instead that the offerings were God's way of describing perfect worship in terms the exiles understood, fulfilled in Christ's once-for-all sacrifice.

Singers and the sons of Zadok (vv44–47)

Worship includes song. The priests who "keep charge of the temple" (v45) were, Block argues, guards — "While scholars commonly assume that cultic service is involved, this is probably incorrect." The altar belongs to "the sons of Zadok" (v46), the faithful priestly line from Solomon's day (1 Kgs 2:35). Wiersbe, in Guzik: "The name Zadok means 'righteous.'" Ezekiel will explain in chapter 44 why they alone come near: they stayed faithful when Israel went astray (44:15). At the center of the court stands the altar (v47) — the way to God still runs through sacrifice.

The porch and the pillars (vv48–49)

Two pillars flank the entrance, as Jachin and Boaz stood before Solomon's temple (1 Kgs 7:21).

Word study (Hebrew)

- **exile — *galuth* (H1546):** captivity, the exiles as a group.
- **visions — *marʾah* (H4759):** a vision, a sight given by God.
- **bronze — *nechosheth* (H5178):** copper, bronze.
- **measuring rod — *qaneh* (H7070):** a reed, a measuring rod.
- **cubit — *ʾammah* (H520):** a cubit, a forearm's length.
- **measured — *madad* (H4058):** to measure, stretch out a line.
- **gate — *shaʿar* (H8179):** a gate, gateway.
- **guardroom / little chamber — *taʾ* (H8372):** a chamber, guardroom.
- **side pillar — *ʾayil* (H352):** a pillar, jamb, projecting post.
- **porch — *ʾulam* (H197):** a porch, vestibule.
- **palm tree — *timorah* (H8561):** a palm-tree ornament.
- **court — *chatser* (H2691):** an enclosure, courtyard.
- **steps — *maʿalah* (H4609):** a step, stairway; a going up.
- **burnt offering — *ʿolah* (H5930):** an offering that goes up, wholly burned.
- **guilt offering — *ʾasham* (H817):** a trespass or guilt offering.
- **keep charge — *shamar* (H8104):** to guard, keep watch.
- **minister — *sharath* (H8334):** to serve, minister.

Cross-references

Exod 12:3; Exod 25:8–9; 1 Kgs 2:35; 1 Kgs 6:29; 1 Kgs 7:21; Isa 2:2–3; Isa 56:6–7; Jer 33:18; Ezek 11:23; Ezek 43:1–5; Ezek 44:15; Zech 2:1–5; Zech 14:16–21; Luke 22:19; 1 Cor 3:16; Eph 2:19–22; Heb 10:4; Heb 10:10–14;

Rev 11:1; Rev 21:15–22.

03 Application
HOW DOES IT CHANGE ME?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 40:4 (KJV)

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.

Command to obey — "see with your eyes, hear with your ears."
The guide told Ezekiel to give attention to everything and then declare it (v4). God's Word is full of details I'm tempted to skim — like these measurements. I'll slow down, look closely, and then pass on what I see. That's what inductive study is: see, hear, pay attention, declare.

Sin to confess — despising the details
I want the dramatic chapters and skip the ones that read like a builder's plans. But God put every cubit there on purpose. I confess the impatience that treats parts of His Word as boring, and I ask for a heart that loves all of it (Ps 119:18).

Warning to heed — fourteen years of ruins
Ezekiel waited fourteen years after the city fell before this vision came. The men I walk with often think fourteen months of sobriety or fourteen days out of prison should fix everything. God works on His timetable, not ours. Don't quit in the ruins; the plans are already drawn.

Promise to trust — God measures what He claims
The measuring rod meant God was claiming the place as His. When the Lord lays His measure on a broken life, He is saying, "This is Mine, and I will build here." To the man whose life looks like burned-out Jerusalem: God has not walked away from the site.

Example to follow — the sons of Zadok
Of all the priests, these were the ones allowed to come near to the LORD to minister to Him (v46). Their name means "righteous," and they stayed faithful when others didn't. I want to be that kind of man — and to raise up men who stay faithful when everyone around them drifts.

Worship
Every gate faces the center, and at the center is the altar. Every step rises toward His presence. God does not leave His people in ruins; He builds, and He builds to dwell with them. Blessed be the God who measures every cubit and keeps every promise.

Prayer

Lord God, You took a man who had watched Your temple fall and showed him a new one. Open my eyes to see, my ears to hear, and my heart to give attention to everything You show me. Lay Your measuring rod on my life and claim it as Yours. Raise up faithful men who come near to You to minister. And bring the men I serve out of the ruins into Your presence. Amen.