

Ezekiel Ch 40:1-41 • “In the Gateway”

Background Ch 40 begins the final major section of Ezekiel — the “Temple Vision” describing the Millennial Temple and the worship that takes place in and around it. This vision was received c. April 573BC – some 12+ years after his first message. Interestingly while it’s placed last in the book, it’s actually not the last vision Ezekiel received (cf Ezekiel 29:17–21).

v1-4 There’s debate around this date, but many place it in the month of Nisan (the first year of the biblical calendar). If that’s accurate, it would fall during the time the Passover lamb would normally be examined for suitability (without spot / blemish). This would obviously have Messianic connotations for Ezekiel and his listeners.

The mountain referred to here is almost certainly the new mountain that emerges at the time of Christ’s return (Is 2v2; Mic 4v1, elsewhere) — well-established as the home of the Millennial Temple.

Quick review of temples: tabernacle (pre-temple); Solomon’s temple (destroyed in 586BC); Zerubbabel’s temple (dedicated 519BC) which is expanded into Herod’s Temple then destroyed in 70AD. The “Third Temple” is built sometime prior to the midpoint of the 70th week of Daniel and (presumably?) destroyed at or prior to Christ’s Second Coming (Dan 9, Matt 24, 2 Thes 2; Rev 11). The Millennial Temple is described in Ez 40–48 and elsewhere; the final temple in the New Jerusalem isn’t a temple but the presence of God and the Lamb (Rev 21:22).

v5 A cubit is approximately 18 inches; a royal cubit is c. 21 inches. Ezekiel uses the royal cubit for measurement. Note: the detail of the following verses would not make sense if the passage were intended to be read metaphorically or allegorically!

v6-16 Palms show up frequently in Scripture (eg Song 7v7 – beauty; Ps 92 – blessing; triumphal entry; feast of booth in kingdom eg Zech 14).

Dimensions: outer wall is 10.5 ft high and 10.5 ft thick.

Three gates (Trinity?). Recall John 10:9ff – Jesus says I AM the door!

v17-19 Three gates in outer wall mirrored by three gates leading to inner courtyard. 175 feet from inner side of outer wall to outer side of inner wall. 30 rooms along outer wall – purpose not specified.

v20-23 North gate – like all three – 87.5 feet long; 43.75 feet wide.

v24-27 Southern gate – same dimensions.

- v28-31 Inner court – 8 steps vs 7 in outer gates. 8 is messianic in rabbinical writing. Dimensions otherwise the same. Palm tree carvings the same.
- v32-34 Inner eastern gate – identical.
- v35-37 Inner northern gate – identical.
- v38-41 Describing space dedicated for preparing animals for sacrifice. Mirrored in all three dates? Perhaps but perhaps not. From beginning of Levitical system – animals to be sacrificed were to be killed on the north side of the altar (Lev 1v11).

Why sacrifices in the Millennium? Some considerations:

- Sacrifices not unique to Israel – see Adam & Eve (Gen 3v21); Cain & Abel (Gen 4v4); Noah (Gen 8v20). Also Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob all offered sacrifices before the giving of the law.
- Blood of Israel's sacrifices never *covered* sin; Jesus in that sense did not replace Israel's sacrifices. Also, not all sacrifices were sin sacrifices — there were friendship offerings, marriage offerings, offerings connected to vows and covenants, etc.
- Jewish believers sacrificed at the temple in the book of Acts. Did they do so in error? Paul said his conscience was clear (Acts 23v1).
- The Lord's Supper commemorates Jesus' death and anticipates His return (1 Cor 11:24-26). Obsolete once Jesus returns.

APPLICATION Romans 12:1-2!