

Ezekiel Part 48 (Ezekiel 40)

1. Chapters 33–39 dealt with the new life Israel will experience when she is gathered back into her land and restored to fellowship with God.
2. The last nine chapters of the book explain how Israel's new order will be established.
3. A new temple will be built as a sign of God's presence among His people (chaps. 40–43), and a new service of worship will be established so the people will have access to God (chaps. 44–46).
4. Then a new division of the land will be made for the people (chaps. 47–48).
5. God had promised to rebuild His sanctuary among His people (37:26–28); chapters 44–46 give the plans for the temple to be rebuilt.
6. There are three interpretations of chapters 40–43:
 - a. Ezekiel predicted a rebuilding of Solomon's temple after the Babylonian Captivity.
 - b. Ezekiel was prophesying about the church in a figurative sense; he did not have a literal temple in mind.
 - c. A still-future literal temple will be built during the millennial kingdom.
7. The first view must be eliminated because it suggests that Ezekiel was mistaken when he wrote.
8. No prophet speaking under God's authority ever uttered a false prediction (Deut. 18:21–22; cf. Matt. 5:17–18). Also, the remnant that returned to Israel after the Exile did not follow Ezekiel's specifications.
9. The second view must also be eliminated because it violates the normal meaning of Ezekiel's words.
10. Those who hold this view are inconsistent for they interpret Ezekiel's earlier, now-fulfilled prophecies literally, yet interpret his yet-unfulfilled prophecies symbolically.
11. Why did Ezekiel take so much space to describe the millennial temple? Here are two reasons:
 - a. The sanctuary was the visible symbol of God's presence among His people.

The prelude to Israel's judgment began when God's glory departed from Solomon's temple in Jerusalem (Ezek. 8–11).

The climax to her restoration as a nation will come when God's glory reenters the new temple in Jerusalem (43:1–5).

- b. The new temple will become the visible reminder of Israel's relationship to God through His New Covenant.

Since God gave detailed instructions for building the tabernacle to accompany His inauguration of the Mosaic Covenant (cf. Ex. 25–40), it is not unusual that He would also supply detailed plans for His new center of worship, to accompany the implementation of the New Covenant.

This temple will be the focal point for the visible manifestation of Israel's new relationship with her God.

12. **40:1–4.** The vision of the new temple came to Ezekiel in the 25th year of ... exile, at the beginning of the year, on the 10th of the month, in the 14th year after the fall of the city.
13. The date was sometime in 573 B.C. The phrase “the beginning of the year” poses some problems.
14. The Israelite religious new year began in Nisan (April–May) and was established at the time of the Exodus (Ex. 12:1–2).
15. However, in Israel's later history the seventh month, Tishri (October–November), became established as the first month of Israel's civil year.
16. So the date would be either April 573 B.C. or October 573 B.C. The October date was also the Day of Atonement (cf. Lev. 23:27).
17. On that very day God ... took Ezekiel back to Jerusalem in a vision (cf. Ezek. 8:1–3).
18. Jerusalem was then vastly different from what it was before.
19. Ezekiel was led on a “tour” of the future temple which he recorded in remarkable detail. This tour was given by a man, probably an angel, whose appearance was like bronze.
20. **40:5.** The angelic being with Ezekiel had a measuring rod ... six long cubits, each of which was a cubit and a handbreadth. A common cubit was about 18 inches long and a long cubit was about 21 inches long. So, the measuring rod was about 10½ feet in length. The wall surrounding the temple was 10½ feet thick and 10½ feet (one rod) high.
- 40:6–16.** Ezekiel passed into the outer court through the gate facing east. This was one of three gates leading into the outer court. Since it faced east, it was the most important gate. He described the gate in detail, with its steps ... threshold, guards' alcoves portico facing the temple with palm trees (40:16) along the projecting walls.
- 40:17–19.** Entering the outer court, Ezekiel saw ... a pavement ... all around the court with 30 rooms along the pavement. These rooms were probably spaced in even numbers along the north, east, and south walls of the temple. The use of these rooms is not stated, but they may have been storage rooms or meeting rooms for the people when they celebrated their feasts. The distance from the inside of the lower gateway (i.e., the east gate) to the outside of the inner court (i.e., to the threshold of the gate leading to the inner court) was 175 feet.