

Zion's King Shall Reign Victorious! - 31

The prophet Ezekiel in chapters 40-48 received a vision of the temple which is to be built on mount Zion, the "holy mountain." The purpose of the temple is for the worship of "the people of the earth," - Ezekiel 46:2, 9 - as Jesus said, "all nations" - Mark 11:17.

During his captivity in Babylonia, the prophet wrote that "in the fourteenth year after the city [of Jerusalem] was captured...the hand of the Lord was upon me; and He took me there [to the site of Jerusalem]. 2 In the visions of God He took me into the land of Israel and set me on a very high mountain; on it toward the south was something like the structure of a city" - Ezekiel 40:1-2.

The most important feature in ancient cities was their walls. Archaeologists have dug into ancient mounds and discovered walls as thick as thirty feet and fifty feet in height. One comment in Scripture shows why the inhabitants were willing to bear the expense of building such walls -

•"Now it came to pass in the spring of the year, at the time when kings go out to battle, that David sent Joab and his servants with him, and all Israel; and they destroyed the people of Ammon and besieged Rabbah" - 2 Samuel 11:1.

At any rate, while Ezekiel stood, in his vision, looking at the scene below he saw "something like the structure of a city," in appearance and size. From there he was moved close to the east side of the building, where he saw a man carrying a measuring rod. He asked Ezekiel to watch and listen while he was taken on a tour through the structure, explaining, "you were brought here in order that I might show it to you. Declare all that you see to the house of Israel" - Ezekiel 40:4.

The reed which the man carried was put to good use during the tour, with many measurements provided. While giving the first measurement, the height and thickness of the wall, he notes that there was "in the man's hand a measuring reed of six cubits long by the cubit and an hand breadth" - Ezekiel 40:5.

The Zondervan Encyclopedia of the Bible explains that the handbreadth or palm (7.404 cm. or 2.915 in.) was generally considered to be 1/6 of a common cubit or 1/7 of a "sacred" or "royal" cubit, both of which were used in Egypt and Babylon. This reed was six of the larger cubits which were of seven handbreadths each. This would make his reed 10 ft. 2 in. or 3.1 m. long.

•The outside dimensions begin in Ezekiel 42:15, "...he brought me out by the way of the gate which faced toward the east and measured it all around. 16 He measured on the east side with the measuring reed five hundred reeds by the measuring reed. 17 He measured on the north side five hundred reeds by the measuring reed.

•18 "On the south side he measured five hundred reeds with the measuring reed. 19 He turned to the west side and measured five hundred reeds with the measuring reed. 20 "He measured it on the four sides; it had a wall all around, the length five hundred [KJV, "reeds"] and the width five hundred, to divide between the holy and the profane" - NAS & KJV.

This shows that the outside dimensions of this future temple will be nearly a mile (more than 1.5 km) on each side, and provide comfortable space for hundreds of thousands of worshippers at a time -in agreement with the prophecy, "all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts..." - Zechariah 14:16.