The Visions of Ezekiel
Lesson 32

C.   Vision Thirteen – (40:1 – 48:35)   25th Year, 10th Day, 1st Month (14th Year after city taken)

Ezekiel's Fifty-eighth Assignment from the LORD (40:1-48:35)

1.   The Timing of the Vision (40:1a)

40:1a 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,

Ezekiel had been in exile for twenty-five years at the time the LORD gave this thirteenth vision. It was the *"beginning of the year,"* meaning the first month and it was the *"tenth of the month,"* meaning it was the tenth day of the first month. We would struggle to justify this year on our calendar today had Ezekiel left the record there. But he did not! Ezekiel went on to tell us that this vision occurred *"in the fourteenth year after the city was taken."* We know from secular history that Jerusalem was taken and destroyed in 586 BC; therefore, the year of this vison was the year calculated by subtracting 14 years from the capture. 586 BC – 14 years = 572 BC. The last vision occurred in 585 BC, which means about thirteen years had passed since the twelfth vision which include the salvation of Israel, the story of the valley of the dry bones, the battle of Gog, the great sacrifice of the LORD and the reason for exiling the whole house of Israel into Assyria and Babylon in the first place. In 572 BC, Nebuchadnezzar had just about finished his attack on the city of Tyre and was about to turn his attention to the city of Sidon. From there, he would move to the delta of Egypt and begin moving up the Nile River taking exiles along the way. Pharaoh Hophra was still alive but General Amasis was in hot pursuit of him. To arrive in Egypt, Nebuchadnezzar would have to march through the emptied land of Israel. All the Israelites, specifically of the Southern Kingdom, were out of the land. Jerusalem was still destroyed and in shambles.

2.   The Place of the Vision (40:1b)

40:1b on that same day the hand of the LORD was upon me and He brought me there.

After stating the timing of the vision in relation to the fall of the city of Jerusalem in 586 BC, Ezekiel tells us that the LORD *"brought me there."* Where? To Jerusalem. We must understand that this is a vision. As before, Ezekiel did not go to Jerusalem; he remained at the *Chebar River* with the exiles. Ezekiel was taken to Jerusalem as his spirit interacted with the LORD in this vision.

3.   The Focus of the Vision

40:2 In the visions of God He brought me into the land of Israel and set me on a very high mountain, and on it to the south there was a structure like a city.

In this vision, Ezekiel found himself sitting on a high mountain to the north of a structure that looked like a city. That structure will be the focus of this vision.

4.   The Helper of the Vision

40:3 So He brought me there; and behold, there was a man whose appearance was like the appearance of bronze, with a line of flax and a measuring rod in his hand; and he was standing in the gateway.

Ezekiel needed help to accomplish the task the LORD had for him. A helper arrived. Ezekiel could see him down by the door to the structure. He looked like a man, but his color was bronze or a yellowish gold. Looking closer Ezekiel saw he had some tools with him – a line and a rod. The line would resemble our plumb line used in construction today to determine the straightness of the structure. The measuring rod was like our yardsticks today; however, as we will see shortly, this measuring rod was longer than the yard sticks we use.

5.   The Recipients of the Vision

40:4 The man said to me, "Son of man, see with your eyes, hear with your ears, and give attention to all that I am going to show you; for you have been brought here in order to show it to you. Declare to the house of Israel all that you see."

Ezekiel may have been the one to see this structure and hear the details about it, but the *house of Israel* was the intended recipient of this vision. Israel needed to know what was coming to Jerusalem in the future because at the time of this vision, Jerusalem lay in rubble.

6.   The Measurements of the Vision (40:5-42:20)

a)   The Outside Temple Wall (40:5)

40:5 And behold, there was a wall on the outside of the temple all around, and in the man's hand was a measuring rod of six cubits, each of which was a cubit and a handbreadth. So he measured the thickness of the wall, one rod; and the height, one rod.

Ezekiel records that *"in the man's hand was a measuring rod of six cubits, each of which was a cubit and a handbreadth."* A normal cubit was between 17 and 18 inches; however, this rod was not the normal six cubits long. Each cubit of this rod was four inches (handbreadth) longer than the normal cubit and therefore each cubit on this rod was about 21 or 22 inches. We are going to use 21 inches for our calculations making the six-cubit rod about 126 inches or 10 feet 6 inch long. One interesting note at this point is the origin of the cubit.   It was determined by the length of the forearm of an average Israelite man from the elbow to the tip of the longest finger. The Hebrew word for *cubit* means *the mother of the arm* which the Latin translated it as the *lower arm* and the English translated it the *forearm*.

In the ancient world, every workman could not use his own forearm to measure the project he was working on. That would never work; not all forearms are exactly the same although the average is 17.5 inches. Therefore, a law of measurement had to be set that would rule over the entire project. A man would be chosen, and his forearm would be measured and marked on a wall or stick. That marking or stick would become the rule of the project. All measurements would be determined by that one rule or standard. Workmen would carve their own stick and carefully match it to the rule. Once their stick was the exact length of the rule, the workman could make a halfway mark on his stick by taking a line the length of the stick and folding it in half. Then he could fold it again to make the quarter markings. Continuing to fold the line, he could make the markings for the eighth, sixteenth, thirty-second and so on. He then called his stick a ruler. All the rulers used by all the workmen matched each other.

Several different lengths have been used and called a cubit in different parts of the world. For instance, the Egyptian Royal cubit was possibly 29 inches long. We are choosing to round up and use 18 inches as a cubit and 21 inches as the long cubit. Do we have any proof to back that measurement up? Yes, we do!

In 1889, Hezekiah's Siloam Tunnel was discovered and an inscription in that tunnel tells us about an important event in the life of the Southern Kingdom. Hezekiah feared that the Assyrian Empire would take Jerusalem. He knew that if they were cut off from the water outside the walls of the city, the people could not survive within the walls while being attacked. The people had to have water. Hezekiah had a tunnel cut that would bring water into the city from outside the wall. In that tunnel an inscription was found that tells us how the workers dug from both ends at the same time and met in the middle below the surface of the ground. One group started inside the city wall and the other started at the Gihon Springs outside the city walls. As the crew dug, they followed the natural soft areas in the rock rather than cutting directly through the stone all the time. It was for that reason that the tunnel has some turns along the way.

When the crews met, the water began to flow. The inscription tells us how far the water flowed and how tall the tunnel was that was that the men had to cause the water to flow. The fifth and sixth lines of the Hebrew inscription found in the tunnel translates as follows.

> (5) then the water began to flow from the source to the pool, a distance of 1200 cubits. And 100

> (6) cubits was the height of the rock above the head of the stone-cutters.

We can measure the tunnel today. It is 1800 feet long. 1800 feet times 12 inches per foot equals 21,600 inches. 21,600 inches divided by 18 inches per cubit equals 1200 cubits.

The height of the tunnel varies greatly. In places it is as low as 6 feet high, in other places it is 125 feet high. The inscription says the rock was 100 cubits "above the head of the stone-cutters." In general, the surface of the land above the tunnel is 100 cubits above the floor of the tunnel today. 100 cubits times 18 inches equals 1, 800 inches. 1,800 inches divided by 12 inches per foot equals 150 feet. Therefore, the inscription of the height above the tunnel must be a reference to the surface above. Still, with this knowledge, we have been able to determine that a cubit, used long after the days of King Hezekiah, was about 17.5 inches. However, Ezekiel's ruler was a cubit plus a handbreadth of 4 inches. Therefore, we will round down and use 21 inches for the cubit in our calculations of this Temple design.

The first measurement for Ezekiel to record was the outer wall. It was about 10 ½ feet thick and 10 ½ feet high and it went around the entire complex.

Before moving on, we must address the wording concerning the "measuring rod" in this verse and as it will be mentioned again in chapter 42, verses 16 through 20, as a "measuring reed." What is the difference between the two? Nothing. In this verse, the Hebrew word for "rod" is *qaneh*. In Ezekiel 42:16, the Hebrew word for "reed" is *qaneh*. The original language makes no difference in the word translated "rod" or "reed." Either word can be used; however, it should be used consistently throughout the book. The NASV 95 is not consistent with the English translation. Others, such as the New King James, NIV and ASV uses the same English word in both places in Ezekiel. When we come to the wording in chapter 42, the "measuring reed" is the same as the "measuring rod" and it is 10 ½ feet long.

b)   The Threshold of the Gate (40:6)

40:6 Then he went to the gate which faced east, went up its steps and measured the threshold of the gate, one rod in width; and the other threshold was one rod in width.

After measuring the thick wall surrounding the complex, we see that the man who will measure everything for Ezekiel climbed a set of steps to measure the *"threshold of the gate."* When we step through any door today, we must cross a threshold. Think about the front door of your home. When you open the door and look down you will see a wooden or metal raised piece which angles down toward the outside to allow rainwater to run away from the door instead of into the house. That piece is called the threshold of the door. You will also notice that it is as thick as the frame or casing that holds the door.

At this gate, we notice that the man takes two measurements of this threshold or the thickness of the wall of the gate opening on each side. Both sides are the same thickness as the wall - 10 ½ feet.

c)   The Guardrooms (40:7)

40:7 The guardroom was one rod long and one rod wide; and there were five cubits between the guardrooms. And the threshold of the gate by the porch of the gate facing inward was one rod.

Going through the threshold, the man measured the guardrooms on each side of the entry. As we will soon see, there were three guardrooms on each side of the hall behind the gate. Each guardroom was the same size, 10 ½ feet by 10 ½ feet. These guardrooms were set apart with an open space five cubits or 8 ¾ feet.

When Ezekiel records that the *"threshold of the gate by the porch of the gate facing inward was one rod,"* the prophet is just recording that the back opening of the entry hall threshold at the porch was 10 ½ feet wide, the same size as the opening at the threshold of the front gate where the man entered from the outside.

d)   The Porch Facing Inward (40:8-9)

40:8   Then he measured the porch of the gate facing inward, one rod.   40:9   He measured the porch of the gate, eight cubits; and its side pillars, two cubits. And the porch of the gate was faced inward.

Stepping out of the hallway, the man measured the porch as eight cubits or 14 feet wide. On each side of the entry opening there was a pillar on each side two cubits or 3.5 feet square. These pillars could be round; however, in describing the pillars in chapter 41 verse 1, the measurement was six cubits wide on each side. Thus, we can safely assume these pillars are square throughout the entire Temple complex.

e)   The Guardrooms to the East and Side Pillars (40:10)

40:10   The guardrooms of the gate toward the east numbered three on each side; the three of them had the same measurement. The side pillars also had the same measurement on each side.

Ezekiel then tells us that there are three guardrooms on each side of the eastern gate, all the same size (10 ½ feet by 10 ½ feet) and all with pillars (3.5 feet or 42 inches square) on each side of the gate entry hall.

f)   The Gateway (40:11)

40:11   And he measured the width of the gateway, ten cubits, and the length of the gate, thirteen cubits.

Even though we know the width of the openings at the front and rear of the entry way and we know the length and width of each guardroom, we have not been told the actual width and length of the entry hall. The gateway entry hole was 10 cubits (17.5 feet) wide and the actual gate was 13 cubits (22.75 feet) long. The gate is longer than the hole.

g)   The Barrier (40:12)

40:12   There was a barrier wall one cubit wide in front of the guardrooms on each side; and the guardrooms were six cubits square on each side.

We have already discovered that there was an open space between each of the guardrooms of 8.75 feet. Now we learn that on the east side of the guardrooms a barrier wall 21 inches thick was found. Entering the gate, the first guardroom did not have a barrier wall of 21 inches thick because it was next to the outer wall that was 10.5 feet thick. The 8.75 feet free space came next and then the east wall to the next guardroom was 21 inches thick. After the 10 ½ foot guard room he came to the 8.75 feet open space and the third guardroom which also had an eastern wall that was 21 inches thick. There were two of these barrier walls on each side of the entry way only on the east side of two of the three guard room.

h)   The Gate from the Roof (40:13)

40:13   He measured the gate from the roof of the one guardroom to the roof of the other, a width of twenty-five cubits from one door to the door opposite.

The man then measured the width of the roof that covered this entry gate complex as a whole. From the north side of one set of three guardrooms to the south side of the guardrooms on the opposite side of the entry wall was 25 cubits or 43.75 feet. The doors of these guardrooms were on the outside leading to the courtyards; they did not open to the entry hallway of the gate complex. Therefore, the measurements were from the doors on the outside walls of the complex from the north to the south.

The guardrooms on the north side were 10 ½ deep. The entry hall was 17.5 feet wide. The guardrooms on the south side were 10 ½ feet deep. The outside walls were 21 inches or one cubit thick. Therefore, we have the following formula.

10.5' room + 21' barrier + 17.5' hall + 21'' barrier + 10.5' room = **42' wide**

We do not know the thickness of the inside walls. The span of the roof is 21 inches wider than the complex explained in the formula above. We might correctly assume that this is an overhand on each side of the gate complex such as the overhangs that we have on our homes today.

i)   The Side Pillars (40:14)

40:14 He made the side pillars sixty cubits high; the gate extended round about to the side pillar of the courtyard.

We have already been told that the size of the pillars was 2 cubits or 42 inches square in girth. Now we are told that they were 60 cubits or 105 feet tall. We are also told that all the pillars around the courtyard (north, east and south at least) were the same size.

j)   The Front Entrance Gate to the Inner Porch Gate (40:15)

40:15 From the front of the entrance gate to the front of the inner porch of the gate was fifty cubits.

Unlike the measurement in 40:14, this measurement is perfect with no hangover. From the entrance gate to the starting edge of the inner porch calculates exactly as 50 cubits or 87.5 feet. Here is the formula.

Front gate threshold 10.5' + first guard room 10.5' + 8.75' free space + 10.5' second guardroom + 8.75' free space + 10.5' third guard room + 10.5' gate threshold + 3.5' Pillar + 14' porch = 87.5 feet

k)   The Shuttered Windows (40:16)

40:16 There were shuttered windows looking toward the guardrooms, and toward their side pillars within the gate all around, and likewise for the porches. And there were windows all around inside; and on each side pillar were palm tree ornaments.

We would expect the shuttered windows to face outward into the courtyards but that was not the case. The doors to the guardrooms faced out to the courtyards; the windows of this complex faced inward toward the entry hall next to the pillars all around. These pillars were decorated with palm tree ornaments.

We have spent a great deal of time describing this eastern entry gate complex. Soon Ezekiel will describe the north and south entry complexes and they are exactly the same as the eastern complex in all dimensions.

l)   The Outer Court Pavement (40:17-19)

40:17 Then he brought me into the outer court, and behold, there were chambers and a pavement made for the court all around; thirty chambers faced the pavement. 40:18 The pavement (that is, the lower pavement) was by the side of the gates, corresponding to the length of the gates. 40:19 Then he measured the width from the front of the lower gate to the front of the exterior of the inner court, a hundred cubits on the east and on the north.

Just past the porch of the east entry gate, Ezekiel saw the man measure the paved outer courtyard that was 100 cubits or 175 feet wide on the north, east and south sides that will surround the Temple complex where the offerings and worship of the LORD on His throne for 1,000 years will take place. This inner Temple complex holds the inner court in this passage. Around the edges of the 175-foot paved courtyard Ezekiel saw 30 chambers that faced inward and they spaced around the north, east and south sides, 10 chambers on each side. This first level that will hold the 30 chambers around the outside of the whole area will be 87.5 feet wide and 875 feet long on the north, east and south sides.

m) The Outer Court Gate and Guardrooms (40:20-22)

40:20 As for the gate of the outer court which faced the north, he measured its length and its width. 40:21 It had three guardrooms on each side; and its side pillars and its porches had the same measurement as the first gate. Its length was fifty cubits and the width twenty-five cubits. 40:22 Its windows and its porches and its palm tree ornaments had the same measurements as the gate which faced toward the east; and it was reached by seven steps, and its porch was in front of them.

These measurements for the north gate complex match exactly the measurements of the eastern gate discussed in 40:4-16. See notes above.

n) The Inner Court Gate on the North (40:23)

40:23 The inner court had a gate opposite the gate on the north as well as the gate on the east; and he measured a hundred cubits from gate to gate.

In this verse, Ezekiel confirms that from the outer wall to the beginning of the inner court, the pavement was 175 feet wide. The Temple complex and its inner court as it is called here also had gates. Ezekiel mentions the inner gates on the north and east sides first.

o) The Inner Court Gate Pillars on the South (40:24-25)

40:24 Then he led me toward the south, and behold, there was a gate toward the south; and he measured its side pillars and its porches according to those same measurements. 40:25 The gate and its porches had windows all around like those other windows; the length was fifty cubits and the width twenty-five cubits.

In this passage, Ezekiel confirms that the south gate complex matched that of the east and north gates. See notes above. The pillars, windows and chambers around the outer courtyard were all the same size.

p) The Steps to the Porches (40:26)

40:26 There were seven steps going up to it, and its porches were in front of them; and it had palm tree ornaments on its side pillars, one on each side.

The complex was terraced leading to the Temple. Coming in from the first level and onto the pavement of the outer court, everything was on the same level. Now, coming toward the Temple we meet seven steps that lead to a next level. At this point a change in the design of the gate occurs – the 14-foot porch comes at the entrance instead of at the exit. Ezekiel saw pillars on each side of the steps decorated with palm trees as discussed before.

q) The Inner Court Gate on the South (40:27-28)

40:27 The inner court had a gate toward the south; and he measured from gate to gate toward the south, a hundred cubits. 40:28 Then he brought me to the inner court by the south gate; and he measured the south gate according to those same measurements.

Ezekiel was then led to the south side where he saw an inner gate that matched the north and east gates the same size and facing the paved courtyard 175 feet wide which led to these important gates. The measurement of all the gates, outer and inner, is all the same as described previously. The only differences in the design is the direction that the gate faces, the number of steps leading to or away from the gate structure and whether or not tables are present on the porch.

r) The Inner Court South Gate Guardrooms and Porches (40:29-34)

40:29 Its guardrooms also, its side pillars and its porches were according to those same measurements. And the gate and its porches had windows all around; it was fifty cubits long and twenty-five cubits wide. 40:30 There were porches all around, twenty-five cubits long and five cubits wide. 40:31 Its porches were toward the outer court; and palm tree

ornaments were on its side pillars, and its stairway had eight steps. 40:32 He brought me into the inner court toward the east. And he measured the gate according to those same measurements. 40:33 Its guardrooms also, its side pillars and its porches were according to those same measurements. And the gate and its porches had windows all around; it was fifty cubits long and twenty-five cubits wide. 40:34 Its porches were toward the outer court; and palm tree ornaments were on its side pillars, on each side, and its stairway had eight steps.

Here Ezekiel describes the inner gate on the south side; however, the three inner gates were the same size and design as the three outer gates except for two changes. First, the 14-foot porch was on the opposite end of the gate complex. In the outer gates, visitors would pass by the guardrooms and then step onto the 14-foot-wide porch. For these inner gates, the visitors would climb the steps and step onto the 14-foot-wide porch before passing the guardrooms. There were eight steps to the porches of this next level.

s)   The Inner Court North Gate Guardrooms, Pillars and Porches (40:35-37)

40:35 Then he brought me to the north gate; and he measured it according to those same measurements, 40:36 with its guardrooms, its side pillars and its porches. And the gate had windows all around; the length was fifty cubits and the width twenty-five cubits. 40:37 Its side pillars were toward the outer court; and palm tree ornaments were on its side pillars on each side, and its stairway had eight steps.

These measurements for the inner court northern gate matched that of the southern inner gate. See 40:29-34.

t)   The Chamber for Burnt Offerings (40:38)

40:38 A chamber with its doorway was by the side pillars at the gates; there they rinse the burnt offering.

It is difficult to determine whether or not the chamber mentioned in this verse is for only the north inner gate or for the north, south and east gates. Some commenters apply it only to the north gate and some apply it to all three gates. It is my opinion that there will be a chamber on the north and south gates to wash the animals before they are sacrificed based on the rest of the information which is about to be revealed in the next passage. The reason for this opinion can be found later in Ezekiel when he describes the movement of the people as they actually come to make an offering to the LORD. Those entering from the south will make their exit to the north and those entering from the north will make their exit to the south. It is a flow of traffic plan for the worshipers of the LORD. Therefore, it would not make sense for those entering from the south to have to go around the courtyard to the north to present their offerings.

u)   The Tables for Burnt Offerings (40:39-42)

40:39 In the porch of the gate were two tables on each side, on which to slaughter the burnt offering, the sin offering and the guilt offering. 40:40 On the outer side, as one went up to the gateway toward the north, were two tables; and on the other side of the porch of the gate were two tables. 40:41 Four tables were on each side next to the gate; or, eight tables on which they slaughter sacrifices. 40:42 For the burnt offering there were four tables of hewn stone, a cubit and a half long, a cubit and a half wide and one cubit high, on which they lay the instruments with which they slaughter the burnt offering and the sacrifice.

This passage discusses the description of the chamber for washing the animals and the tables for the slaughter at the north gate. Two tables will be located on each side of the north gate, four tables in all at that gate. On the south side there will be two tables on each side of that gate. The total tables for both sides will be eight. Each table will be of solid stone, square, 31 ½ inches wide and deep and 21 inches tall.

v)   The Hooks (40:43)

40:43 The double hooks, one handbreadth in length, were installed in the house all around; and on the tables was the flesh of the offering.

For those who have never hunted larger animals, the idea of hanging an animal on a double hook is often hard to comprehend; however, for hunters, the idea of a double hook is completely understandable. After the live animal is laid on the table and killed, it was hung by the hind legs, one leg on each of the double hook so the skin of the animal could be removed. Hides were rarely burned on the altar. These hooks are four inches long. Ezekiel saw them placed around all the chamber walls to be used for the larger animals and on the edges of the eight tables for the smaller animals. It was also on these hooks that the hides were hung until they were taken to be tanned for other uses. The hides would be on the hooks and the skinned animal would be taken back to the table to be cut up according to the specifications for the offering on the altar.

w)   The Chambers for Singers (40:44-46)

40:44 From the outside to the inner gate were chambers for the singers in the inner court, one of which was at the side of the north gate, with its front toward the south, and one at the side of the south gate facing toward the north. 40:45 He said to me, "This is the chamber which faces toward the south, intended for the priests who keep charge of the temple; 40:46 but the chamber which faces toward the north is for the priests who keep charge of the altar. These are the sons of Zadok, who from the sons of Levi come near to the LORD to minister to Him."

Once past the inner gate complex and the chamber for the sacrifices, the inner court comes in view. Chambers will be seen on the north and south sides of the Temple for the singers. In this passage we learn that the singers will all be priests. The chambers on the north side with the doors that faced south will be for the priests that were in charge of the Temple but the chambers on the south side of the complex will be for the priests would be in charge of the altar – the sons of Zadok.

x)   The Court (40:47)

40:47 He measured the court, a perfect square, a hundred cubits long and a hundred cubits wide; and the altar was in front of the temple.

Then the man measured for Ezekiel the inner courtyard where the altar stood. It was 175 feet square. This courtyard was in front of the steps that led to the Temple porch.

y)   The Porch of the Temple (40:48-49)

40:48 Then he brought me to the porch of the temple and measured each side pillar of the porch, five cubits on each side; and the width of the gate was three cubits on each side. 40:49 The length of the porch was twenty cubits and the width eleven cubits; and at the stairway by which it was ascended were columns belonging to the side pillars, one on each side.

Finally, we come to the porch of the millennial Temple. Not in this verse, but will be revealed later, eight steps lead up to this Temple porch. The pillars on both front outer edges of the porch were five cubits or 8.75 feet square. The Temple porch faced the east. On the north and south sides of this porch, behind the pillars on each side was a gate three cubits or 5.25 feet long that reached the main wall of the nave. The whole porch area was 20 cubits or 35 feet long and 11 cubits or 19.25 feet wide.

At this inner eastern gate entrance two columns will stand. These columns will be round as opposed to the pillars which will be square. We are told the size of the pillars, but we are not told the girth of the columns. The pillars are on the outer edges of the porch and one column stands next to a pillar toward the center of the porch.

It is now time to enter the Holy Temple and record the measurements.