

Ezekiel 40:27

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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.

Analysis

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. This verse marks the transition from the outer court to the **inner court** (chatser penimah, חצר פנימה), representing a deeper level of access to God's presence. The **hundred cubits** (approximately 150 feet) between the outer south gate and the inner south gate creates spatial separation that reinforces the concept of progressive holiness. Distance in temple architecture symbolizes the magnitude of the gulf between sinful humanity and holy God—a gulf bridged only by God's gracious provision.

The Hebrew verb madad (מִדָּד, "he measured") appears repeatedly throughout Ezekiel 40-48, emphasizing divine precision and order. God's heavenly messenger meticulously measures every dimension, demonstrating that nothing about approaching God is arbitrary or casual. These measurements aren't merely architectural specifications but theological statements: God determines how He will be approached, establishing boundaries that protect His holiness while graciously providing access through prescribed means.

The hundred-cubit distance also served practical functions in temple ritual. This space accommodated the congregation of worshipers who brought sacrifices, allowing them to witness offerings without entering the inner court reserved for priests. Theologically, this separation prefigures the New Testament truth that Christ has torn the veil, granting believers direct access to God's presence

(Hebrews 10:19-22). What required physical distance and mediated access in the old covenant becomes immediate and personal through Christ's priesthood.

Historical Context

The concept of concentric courts with increasing holiness characterized ancient Israelite worship from the tabernacle through both temples. The wilderness tabernacle had an outer court for the altar and laver, with the tent itself divided into Holy Place and Most Holy Place. Solomon's temple expanded this pattern with inner and outer courts, a feature Ezekiel's vision maintains and elaborates.

Archaeological discoveries at other Near Eastern temples reveal similar multi-court layouts. However, Israel's design uniquely emphasized ethical holiness rather than ritual purity alone. The progression from outer to inner courts symbolized the moral transformation required to approach Yahweh—not merely ceremonial cleansing but heart purification. The hundred cubits served as both invitation (access is provided) and warning (approach must follow God's prescribed pattern).

For the exiles, this architectural detail addressed a crucial question: would post-exilic worship match the glory of Solomon's temple? Ezekiel's vision transcends mere restoration to show an eschatological temple surpassing previous structures. The measured precision promised that God had not lowered His standards or simplified access. The path to His presence remains carefully defined, requiring progressive sanctification and priestly mediation—ultimately fulfilled in Christ, our great High Priest.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

1. How does the hundred-cubit distance between outer and inner courts illustrate the magnitude of sin's separation from God?
2. What does God's meticulous measurement of every dimension teach about His character and His standards for worship?
3. In what ways has Christ eliminated the spatial distance between you and God while maintaining the holiness that distance represented?
4. How should the progression from outer to inner courts shape your understanding of progressive sanctification?
5. What boundaries has God established in your spiritual life to protect both His holiness and your safe approach to Him?

Interlinear Text

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|----------------------|----------------------|--------------|-----------|------------|-----------------|
| And there was a gate | court | in the inner | toward | the south | and he measured |
| H8179 | H2691 | H6442 | H1870 | H1864 | H4058 |
| And there was a gate | And there was a gate | toward | the south | an hundred | |
| H8179 | H413 | H8179 | H1870 | H1864 | H3967 |

אָמֹת:

cubits

H520

Additional Cross-References

Ezekiel 40:23 (Parallel theme): 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.

Ezekiel 40:32 (Parallel theme): And he brought me into the inner court toward the east: and he measured the gate according to these measures.

Ezekiel 40:19 (Parallel theme): 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.

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