

Ezekiel 40:47

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

So he measured the court, an hundred cubits long, and an hundred cubits broad, foursquare; and the altar that was before the house.

Analysis

The inner court's perfect square dimensions—'an hundred cubits long, and an hundred cubits broad, foursquare'—symbolize perfection, stability, and divine order. The number 100 represents completeness (10 x 10), suggesting comprehensive provision for worship. The square shape (like the Most Holy Place in 1 Kings 6:20) emphasizes symmetry and harmony. The altar's position 'before the house' (temple proper) indicates its centrality—sacrifice stands between sinful humanity and holy God. All approach to God must pass through the altar, foreshadowing Christ's cross as the sole mediator (John 14:6, 1 Timothy 2:5). The altar's prominence teaches that worship without atonement is impossible—'without shedding of blood is no remission' (Hebrews 9:22). Reformed theology emphasizes that Christ's sacrifice on Calvary's 'altar' satisfies divine justice, enabling reconciliation (Romans 3:23-26).

Historical Context

Solomon's temple had an inner court for priests (1 Kings 6:36, 2 Chronicles 4:9) separate from the outer court for Israel. The dimensions echo tabernacle proportions, maintaining continuity with Mosaic worship. The bronze altar in Solomon's temple was massive—20 cubits square and 10 cubits high (2 Chronicles 4:1)—dominating the courtyard. Archaeological evidence from Israelite sanctuaries shows horned altars similar to biblical descriptions. The altar's centrality reflects ancient Near Eastern temple design, but Israel's altar uniquely served atonement,

not feeding deity (as in pagan temples). For the exiles, who hadn't seen legitimate sacrificial worship for decades, the altar's restoration promised renewed access to God through prescribed means. The vision assured that future worship would maintain continuity with past revelation while anticipating eschatological fulfillment.

Related Passages

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. How central is the cross (the ultimate altar) in your worship and daily life, or has it become peripheral?
2. What does the court's perfect square dimensions teach about God's character as a God of order and beauty?
3. How do you maintain proper proportion—keeping the 'altar' (Christ's sacrifice) as the focal point rather than programs or personalities?

Interlinear Text

וַיִּמָּד	אֶת	הַחֲצַר	אֲרוֹן	מֵאָה	אַמָּה	וְרָחֵב
So he measured	H853	the court	long	an hundred	cubits	broad
H4058		H2691	H753	H3967	H520	H7341
מֵאָה	אַמָּה	מִרְבַּעַת	וְהַמִּזְבֵּחַ	לִפְנֵי	הַבַּיִת:	
an hundred	cubits	foursquare	and the altar	that was before	the house	
H3967	H520	H7251	H4196	H6440	H1004	

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 40:19 (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.

Ezekiel 40:27 (Parallel theme): 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.

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