

Ezekiel 40:5

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And behold a wall on the outside of the house round about, and in the man's hand a measuring reed of six cubits long by the cubit and an hand breadth: so he measured the breadth of the building, one reed; and the height, one reed.

Analysis

The measuring begins with a wall surrounding the temple complex—physical separation between sacred and profane. The Hebrew גֹּדֶר (gader, 'wall') emphasizes boundary and protection. The measuring reed's specification—'six cubits long by the cubit and an hand breadth' (approximately 10.5 feet using the longer 'royal cubit')—establishes the standard for all subsequent measurements. This precision reflects God's character: exact, unchanging, holy. The wall's dimensions—'one reed' in breadth and height (forming a perfect square in cross-section)—symbolize stability and perfection. Reformed theology sees this wall as representing God's preservation of His church—separated from the world, protected by divine decree. As Paul writes, God has 'set a wall of partition' (Ephesians 2:14) that Christ removes between Jew and Gentile, but maintains between His people and the world (2 Corinthians 6:14-18).

Historical Context

Ancient temples featured enclosure walls defining sacred precincts. Archaeological excavations of Near Eastern temples reveal outer walls separating holy ground from common areas. Solomon's temple had similar distinctions—outer court, inner court, Holy Place, and Most Holy Place (1 Kings 6-7). The wall's thickness and height prevented unauthorized access, reflecting Levitical regulations about

approaching God's presence (Numbers 1:51, 18:7). After the exile, Nehemiah rebuilt Jerusalem's walls before proper worship resumed (Nehemiah 6-7), demonstrating that security and sanctity go together. The 'cubit and a hand breadth' (approximately 21 inches) was the royal or long cubit used in monumental architecture, distinguishing this from common measurement. This suggests the temple's royal character—God is the ultimate King dwelling among His people.

Related Passages

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. How does the wall's separation between sacred and common challenge cultural pressure to blur distinctions between church and world?
2. What 'walls' does God establish in your life to protect holiness and prevent compromise?
3. How do we maintain healthy separation without falling into self-righteous isolation?

Interlinear Text

וְהִנֵּה הַ	חוֹמָה הַ	מִחוּץ	לְבֵית	סָבִיב יב	סָבִיב יב
H2009	And behold a wall	on the outside	of the house	round about	round about
	H2346	H2351	H1004	H5439	H5439
וְיָד	הָאִישׁ	קָנָה הַ	הַמֶּדֶד הַ	שֵׁשׁ	בָּאַמָּה
hand	and in the man's	reed	a measuring	of six	cubits
H3027	H376	H7070	H4060	H8337	H520
וְטַפַּח	וַיִּמְד	אֶת	רֹחַב	הַבְּנִיָן	קָנָה הַ
and an hand breadth	so he measured	H853	the breadth	of the building	reed
H2948	H4058		H7341	H1146	H7070
אֶחָד:	וְקוֹמָה הַ	קָנָה הַ	אֶחָד:		
one	and the height	reed	one		
H259	H6967	H7070	H259		

Additional Cross-References

Ezekiel 42:20 (Parallel theme): He measured it by the four sides: it had a wall round about, five hundred reeds long, and five hundred broad, to make a separation between the sanctuary and the profane place.

Isaiah 26:1 (Parallel theme): In that day shall this song be sung in the land of Judah; We have a strong city; salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks.