

Ezekiel 40:6

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Then came he unto the gate which looketh toward the east, and went up the stairs thereof, and measured the threshold of the gate, which was one reed broad; and the other threshold of the gate, which was one reed broad.

Analysis

The eastern gate receives priority in the vision—directionally and theologically significant. The 'gate which looketh toward the east' recalls where God's glory departed (Ezekiel 10:18-19, 11:23) and must return (Ezekiel 43:1-4). Stairs ascending to the gate emphasize approaching God requires elevation—physically and spiritually. The threshold (Hebrew שַׁף, *saph*) marked transition from common to sacred space. Its measurement—'one reed broad'—indicates substantial separation. In Scripture, thresholds hold significance: the Passover blood marked doorposts (Exodus 12:7), priests guarded temple thresholds (2 Kings 22:4), and judgment befell those treating God's threshold with contempt (1 Samuel 5:5, Zephaniah 1:9). The double threshold ('the threshold... and the other threshold') suggests progressive stages of approach to God's presence, reflecting Reformed emphasis on reverent, mediated access through Christ our High Priest (Hebrews 4:14-16).

Historical Context

Ancient Near Eastern gates served military, commercial, and judicial functions. Temple gates controlled access to sacred space. Solomon's temple had elaborate gate structures (1 Kings 6). Archaeological discoveries at Megiddo, Hazor, and Gezer reveal multi-chambered gates from Solomon's era, providing context for

Ezekiel's vision. The eastern orientation held cosmological significance—sunrise symbolized divine presence and new creation. Many ancient temples faced east toward the rising sun, but Israel's eastward orientation uniquely anticipated YHWH's glory returning from the east. The stairs ascending to gates appear in both archaeological remains and biblical texts (Ezekiel 40:6, 22, 26), indicating elevated sacred precincts. For exiles familiar with Babylonian temple architecture, these details would have resonated while maintaining distinctly Israelite theological emphases.

Related Passages

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. What 'stairs' of spiritual discipline and preparation must you ascend to approach God in worship?
2. How does the eastern gate's significance (where glory departed and must return) speak to personal or corporate spiritual restoration?
3. In what ways do we trivialize 'thresholds' between sacred and secular in contemporary Christian life?

Interlinear Text

וַיָּבֹא וְאֵל	הַשַּׁעַר	אֲשֶׁר	פָּנָיו	דָּבָר	יָמָה	הַקֶּדֶם
Then came	he unto the gate	which looketh	toward			the east
H935	H413 H8179	H834 H6440	H1870			H6921
וַיַּעַל	בַּמַּעְלֹת	וַיִּמְדֹּד	אֶת	סָף		
and went up	the stairs	thereof and measured		the threshold		
H5927	H4609	H4058	H853	H5592		
הַשַּׁעַר	קֶנֶה	אֶתְּ	רָחֵב:	וְאֶת	סָף	
he unto the gate	reed	and the other	broad		the threshold	
H8179	H7070	H259	H7341	H853	H5592	
אֶתְּ	קֶנֶה	אֶתְּ	רָחֵב:			
and the other	reed	and the other	broad			
H259	H7070	H259	H7341			

Additional Cross-References

Ezekiel 43:1 (Parallel theme): Afterward he brought me to the gate, even the gate that looketh toward the east:

Ezekiel 8:16 (Parallel theme): And he brought me into the inner court of the LORD'S house, and, behold, at the door of the temple of the LORD, between the porch and the altar, were about five and twenty men, with their backs toward the temple of the LORD, and their faces toward the east; and they worshipped the sun toward the east.

Psalms 84:10 (Parallel theme): For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness.

Jeremiah 19:2 (Parallel theme): And go forth unto the valley of the son of Hinnom, which is by the entry of the east gate, and proclaim there the words that I shall tell thee,

Nehemiah 3:29 (Parallel theme): After them repaired Zadok the son of Immer over against his house. After him repaired also Shemaiah the son of Shechaniah, the keeper of the east gate.

1 Chronicles 9:24 (Parallel theme): In four quarters were the porters, toward the east, west, north, and south.

1 Chronicles 9:18 (Parallel theme): Who hitherto waited in the king's gate eastward: they were porters in the companies of the children of Levi.

Ezekiel 40:20 (Parallel theme): And the gate of the outward court that looked toward the north, he measured the length thereof, and the breadth thereof.

Ezekiel 11:1 (Parallel theme): Moreover the spirit lifted me up, and brought me unto the east gate of the LORD'S house, which looketh eastward: and behold at the door of the gate five and twenty men; among whom I saw Jaazaniah the son of Azur, and Pelatiah the son of Benaiah, princes of the people.

Ezekiel 10:18 (Parallel theme): Then the glory of the LORD departed from off the threshold of the house, and stood over the cherubims.