

Ezekiel 42:11

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the way before them was like the appearance of the chambers which were toward the north, as long as they, and as broad as they: and all their goings out were both according to their fashions, and according to their doors.

Analysis

And the way before them was like the appearance of the chambers which were toward the north, as long as they, and as broad as they: and all their goings out were both according to their fashions, and according to their doors. The emphasis on symmetry—**as long as they, and as broad as they**—reflects the divine order and perfection in God's ideal temple. The Hebrew mishpatehen (מִשְׁפָטֵיהֶם, "their fashions" or "their ordinances") and petachehem (פֶּתַחֵיהֶם, "their doors") stress that both northern and southern chambers followed identical specifications, with nothing arbitrary or asymmetrical.

This architectural symmetry carries theological weight: God's ways are consistent, His justice impartial, His design perfect. The temple, as microcosm of God's ordered creation, displayed harmony and proportion. **All their goings out** refers to the exits and access points—priests entering from either north or south experienced the same progression toward holiness, neither having advantage nor disadvantage. This anticipates the New Testament truth that in Christ there is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free—all access God through the same mediator (Galatians 3:28, Ephesians 2:18).

Historical Context

Ancient Near Eastern temples often featured asymmetry reflecting chaotic polytheistic cosmologies or pragmatic additions over time. In contrast, the tabernacle (Exodus 25-40) and Solomon's temple (1 Kings 6-7) emphasized symmetry and order, reflecting the one true God's perfection. Ezekiel's vision perfects this symmetry even further—every measurement is exact, every chamber has its counterpart. For the exiles who had seen the temple destroyed, this vision assured them that God's future restoration would surpass even Solomon's glory. The symmetry also had practical import: priests serving on different sides of the temple performed identical functions, reinforcing that holiness requirements were universal, not variable based on circumstance or clan. This divine order contrasted sharply with the chaos and injustice of Babylonian exile.

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. How does the symmetry and order of God's temple challenge the chaos and relativism of modern culture?
2. What does identical access from north and south teach about God's impartiality in providing access to His presence?

Interlinear Text

אָשָׁר	פָּلָשָׁכְ וְתָ	כְּמַרְאָה	לִפְנֵי	מֵ	זֶה	רֹא	בְּמִרְאָה	הַ	בְּמִרְאָה	הַ	רֹא
And the way	before	them was like the appearance					of the chambers				
H1870	H6440	H4758					H3957				
אָשָׁר	פָּלָשָׁכְ וְתָ	כְּמַרְאָה	לִפְנֵי	מֵ	זֶה	רֹא	בְּמִרְאָה	הַ	בְּמִרְאָה	הַ	רֹא
And the way	the north	as long as	they and as broad as								
H1870	H6828	H753	H3651				H7341				
וְכָמְשָׁפְטִים	אֵין	זֶה	אֵין	זֶה	אֵין	זֶה	וְכָמְשָׁפְטִים	אֵין	זֶה	אֵין	זֶה
they and all their goings out			were both according to their fashions				H4941				
H4161											
וְכָפְתִּיחָהָן											
and according to their doors											
H6607											

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