

Ezekiel 42:19

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

He turned about to the west side, and measured five hundred reeds with the measuring reed.

Analysis

He turned about to the west side, and measured five hundred reeds with the measuring reed. The final side—the west—completes the perfect square. The verb *savav* (סָבַב, "turned about") indicates the angel's deliberate movement, completing the circuit. The west held deep significance in Israelite consciousness: it was the direction of the Mediterranean Sea (*yam*, יָם, both 'sea' and 'west'), the great barrier beyond which lay the unknown world. The west also represented the end—where the sun sets, where day concludes.

Yet here the west side receives the same five-hundred-reed measurement, incorporating even the direction of endings and unknowns into the sacred precinct. **This completes the perfect square: 500 × 500 reeds on all four sides, creating a sanctuary that faces all directions with equal holiness.** No orientation is excluded from God's redemptive architecture. The temple stands as axis mundi—cosmic center from which God's presence radiates in all directions, sanctifying north, south, east, and west. This anticipates the New Testament vision where the gospel goes to all nations (Matthew 28:19), God's glory fills the earth (Habakkuk 2:14), and the New Jerusalem measures perfectly square (Revelation 21:16).

Historical Context

In the ancient Near East, temples typically faced east, with the west being the rear, less prominent side. Solomon's temple followed this pattern (1 Kings

6:14-38). Yet Ezekiel's vision gives the west equal prominence, equal measurement, equal sanctity. This democratization of direction challenged cultural assumptions about spiritual geography. The Mediterranean Sea (the Great Sea, the western boundary) had often been seen as Israel's limit—the edge of the known world. Yet in Ezekiel's temple, the western wall stands as firm and measured as the eastern entrance. This presages the gospel going 'to the ends of the earth' (Acts 1:8), including the western nations. The perfect square, with all sides equal, pictures the inclusivity of God's redemptive plan—not privileging one people, nation, or direction, but extending salvation to all who enter through the appointed gate.

Related Passages

James 2:17 – Faith and works

Hebrews 11:1 – Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. What 'western' areas—endings, unknowns, boundaries—do you need to trust to God's sovereign measurement?
2. How does the equal measurement of all four sides shape your vision of God's global, all-directional mission?

Interlinear Text

בְּקָנָה	בְּקָנָה	בְּקָנָה	בְּקָנָה
reed	reed	with the measuring	
H7070	H7070		H4060

