

Ezekiel 43:14

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And from the bottom upon the ground even to the lower settle shall be two cubits, and the breadth one cubit; and from the lesser settle even to the greater settle shall be four cubits, and the breadth one cubit.

Analysis

And from the bottom upon the ground even to the lower settle shall be two cubits, and the breadth one cubit. The Hebrew *ḥêq* (חֵק, "bottom") refers to the base level, and *'azārâ* (אֶזְרָא, "settle" or "ledge") describes a protruding platform encircling the altar at this height. This lower ledge stood two cubits (approximately 3.4 feet) above ground level with a one-cubit (1.7 feet) breadth. The stepped construction created a series of platforms ascending toward heaven, each more restricted in access than the one below—visual theology teaching that approaching God requires progressive consecration.

"And from the lesser settle even to the greater settle shall be four cubits, and the breadth one cubit." A second ledge, four cubits (approximately 6.8 feet) higher than the first, provided a platform for priestly ministry. The terminology "lesser" and "greater" (*hā'azārâ haqqəṭannâ* and *hā'azārâ haggədôlâ*) indicates hierarchy and progression. These ledges served practical purposes—allowing priests to reach different parts of the altar—but primarily taught theological truth: access to God's presence has ordained stages, not casual approach.

This structure anticipates Christ's superior priesthood. While Ezekiel's altar required multiple levels for limited priestly access, Christ grants believers direct access to God's throne (Hebrews 4:16, 10:19-22). The external steps and ledges symbolized what Christ's finished work internalized—progressive sanctification

and bold entrance into the holy presence through His blood. What required careful physical ascent under the old covenant becomes immediate spiritual reality in the new.

Historical Context

The tabernacle's bronze altar (Exodus 27:1-8) stood only 3 cubits high with a surrounding ledge. Solomon's altar was larger (2 Chronicles 4:1), but Ezekiel's vision describes an even more massive structure, signifying the greater glory of the eschatological temple. The ascending platforms recall ancient ziggurats (staged towers), but with crucial difference—pagan ziggurats represented human effort to reach heaven, while Israel's altar represented God's provision for sinners to approach Him through substitutionary sacrifice.

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. How do the altar's ascending levels illustrate that true worship requires God-ordained means of approach, not human invention?
2. What does Christ's elimination of these physical barriers teach about the access believers now have to God?

Interlinear Text

וּמִן יֶקֶד	הָאָרֶץ	עַד	הַעֲזֹבָה הַ	הַתַּחְתּוֹנָה
And from the bottom	upon the ground	H5704	settle	even to the lower
H2436	H776		H5835	H8481

שְׁנֵי יָם	הָעֲמָה:	וְרֹחַב	הָעֲמָה:	אֶחָד ת	הַעֲזֹבָה הַ
shall be two	cubit	and the breadth	cubit	one	settle
H8147	H520	H7341	H520	H259	H5835

הַקָּטָן הַ	עַד	הַעֲזֹבָה הַ	הַגְּדוֹלָה	אַרְבַּע ע	הָעֲמָה:
and from the lesser	H5704	settle	even to the greater	shall be four	cubit
H6996		H5835	H1419	H702	H520

וְרֹחַב	הָעֲמָה:
and the breadth	cubit
H7341	H520