

Ezekiel 42 - The Priestly Chambers of the Outer Court; Outer Wall; Overall Measurements of Temple Complex

III. Restoration of Israel (Ezek 33:1—48:45)

(7) Restored Temple (Ezek 40:1—48:35)

(A) Temple (Ezek 40:1—43:27)

(d) The temple structure itself (40:48—42:20)

(vii) Inner court chambers (42:1-14)

(a) Description (42:1-12)

(b) Their use by the priests (42:13-14)

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Ezekiel 42

(vii) Inner court chambers (42:1-14)

(a) Description (42:1-12)

1 Then he brought me out into the outer courtyard, the way toward the north; and he brought me to the chamber which was opposite the separate area and opposite the building toward the north.

1 Then he brought me out into the outer court, the way toward the north; and he brought me to the chamber which was opposite the separate area and opposite the building toward the north.

1 Then he brought me to the outer, north-facing courtyard into the chamber that stood opposite the structure that was facing north.

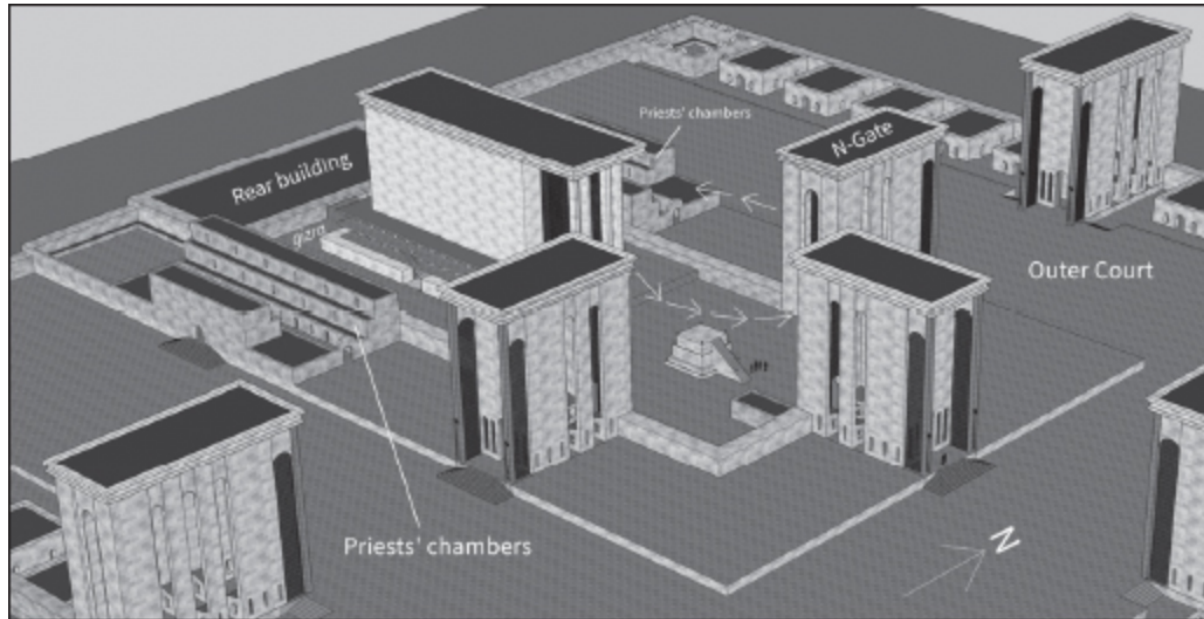
1 Then he brought me forth into the utter court, the way toward the north: and he brought me into the chamber that was over against the separate place, and which was before the building toward the north.

- Ezekiel was taken from the Temple porch (41:25), into the Outer Court. The fact that the angel led him northward indicates that they exited the Inner Court through the northern gate.

— The angel brought Ezekiel into the chamber that was along the wall separating the Outer Court from the Inner Court, adjacent to the *gizra* (separate place) surrounding the Temple.

— The chamber Ezekiel entered belonged to a block of chambers described in 41:10, which served as accommodations for ministering priests. You could only access these chambers from the Outer Court.

— The features described in the following verses refer to the priestly chambers in the north of the Temple. However, the same features also apply to the south side. On both sides, there were identical buildings, chambers, walls and walkways, thus maintaining the symmetry that is consistently observed in the description of the Millennial Temple.



2 Along the length, *which was* a hundred cubits, *was* the north door; the width *was* fifty cubits.

2 Along the length, *which was* a hundred cubits, *was* the north door; the width *was* fifty cubits.

2 It stood 100 cubits long and 50 cubits wide, with a door in the middle.

2 Before the length of an hundred cubits *was* the north door, and the breadth *was* fifty cubits.

- The priestly chambers were divided into two distinct buildings, each with specific dimensions and functions.

— The first of these buildings, described here, measured 175 feet by 87 feet 6 inches (53 x 30 meters). This is the building that Ezekiel and the angel entered in v1.

— Verses 13-14 will explain that this building included changing rooms for the priests and dining rooms where offerings were consumed.

3 Opposite the twenty *cubits* which *belonged* to the inner courtyard, and opposite the stone pavement which *belonged* to the outer courtyard, **was gallery corresponding to gallery in three stories.**

3 Opposite the twenty *cubits* which belonged to the inner court, and opposite the pavement which belonged to the outer court, *was* gallery corresponding to gallery in three

stories.

3 Opposite the 20 cubits wide inner court, and opposite the paved area that comprised the outer court, there were three stories of galleries that faced each other.

3 Over against the twenty cubits which were for the inner court, and over against the pavement which was for the outer court, was gallery against gallery in three stories.

- This verse is difficult to interpret because of the differences between the LXX and the Masoretic Text:

- LXX: "The arcades were decorated in the same manner as the gates of the Inner Court and in the same manner as the peristyles of the exterior courtyard. Triple stoas were arranged in rows, facing each other."
- Masoretic Text: "Opposite the twenty cubit space belonging to the Inner Court and opposite the pavement belonging to the exterior courtyard, were galleries facing galleries in three stories."

— The Masoretic Text is clearer on the spatial arrangement described: the *gizra* (sacred space) separating the first building with its priestly chambers from the Temple was 20 cubits, or 35 feet (10.7 meters), wide. This area belonged to the Inner Court. Furthermore, the verse refers to the Outer Court and implies that the second building bordered the pavement belonging to that area. Subsequent verses will confirm this implication.

- "...gallery corresponding to gallery in three *stories*" - the galleries of the two buildings faced one another (Cf. 41:15)

4 In front of the chambers was an inner passage ten cubits wide, a way of one *hundred* cubits; and their openings were on the north.

4 Before the chambers was an inner walk ten cubits wide, a way of one *hundred* cubits; and their openings were on the north.

4 In front of the chambers there was an inner walkway ten cubits wide and 100 cubits wide, the openings to which were on the north.

4 And before the chambers was a walk of ten cubits breadth inward, a way of one cubit; and their doors toward the north.

- A walkway ran between the two buildings that measured 17 feet 6 inches (5.3 meters) wide and 175 feet long.

- The doors of the building faced north and opened directly onto the walkway.

5 Now the upper chambers were smaller because the galleries took more *space* away from them than from the lower and middle ones in the building.

5 Now the upper chambers were smaller because the galleries took more *space* away from them than from the lower and middle ones in the building.

5 The upper chambers were narrower, since the galleries required more space than did the lower and middle portions of the building.

5 Now the upper chambers were shorter: for the galleries were higher than these, than the lower, and than the middlemost of the building.

- The chambers on the top story were smaller than those on the lower levels because the upper wall slanted inward compared to the lower walls. This design allowed room for the galleries, which did not extend beyond the leading edge of the lower walls. Consequently, the building narrowed as it rose upward.

6 For they *were* in three *stories* and had no pillars like the pillars of the courtyards; for that reason *the upper chambers* were set back from the ground *upward*, more than the lower and middle ones.

6 For they *were* in three stories and had no pillars like the pillars of the courts; therefore *the upper chambers* were set back from the ground upward, more than the lower and middle ones.

6 The three part structure had no columns, unlike the courts, which is why the upper chambers were offset from the ground upward, more so than the lower and middle chambers.

6 For they were in three stories, but had not pillars as the pillars of the courts: therefore the building was straitened more than the lowest and the middlemost from the ground.

- The structural reason for the upper chambers being smaller than the lower chambers was because the cloisters were supported by pillars inside the court walls.

- Unlike the cloisters, the galleries of the upper story lacked external pillars for support. Instead, the galleries were integrated into the chambers themselves and rested on the wall of the floor below. This arrangement caused the uppermost chambers to be reduced in size, as the galleries occupied part of the space within the upper story.

7 As for **the outer wall by the side of the chambers**, toward the outer courtyard facing the chambers, its length *was* fifty cubits.

7 As for the outer wall by the side of the chambers, toward the outer court facing the chambers, its length *was* fifty cubits.

7 The outer wall by the side of the chambers toward the outer court and facing the chambers was 50 cubits long.

7 And the wall that was without over against the chambers, toward the utter court on the forepart of the chambers, the length thereof was fifty cubits.

- This verse provides details of the second building...

- "...the outer wall by the side of the chambers" - the entire length of this wall was made up by the building itself and an adjacent wall.

— This wall bordered the Outer Court and ran parallel to the longer block of chambers. It extended for 87 feet 6 inches (26.7 meters) in the direction of the Northern Gate of the Inner Court.

8 For the length of the chambers which *were* in the outer courtyard *was* fifty cubits; and behold, *the length of those* facing the main room *was* a hundred cubits.

8 For the length of the chambers which *were* in the outer court *was* fifty cubits; and behold, *the length of those* facing the temple *was* a hundred cubits.

8 While the chambers in the outer court were 50 cubits in length, the chambers facing the Temple were 100 cubits long.

8 For the length of the chambers that were in the utter court was fifty cubits: and, lo, before the temple were an hundred cubits.

- The length of the building itself was just as long as the wall that belonged to it. Together, these two structures were the same length as the building facing the Temple (175 feet / 53.3 meters). This is the same length as the Temple itself.

In summary, the priestly chambers on the north side of the Temple were divided into two buildings that were separated by a 10-cubit-wide walkway. The block of chambers adjacent to the *gizra* was 100 cubits long, running parallel to the Temple. The second block of chambers, facing the Outer Court, measured 50 cubits in length from west to east. The 50-cubit wall of the shorter building formed part of the boundary between the Inner and Outer Courts and extended from the end of the shorter block to a point opposite the Temple's eastern end, thus also aligning with the outer walls of the longer building.

9 And **below these chambers** *was* the entrance on the east side, as one enters them from the outer courtyard.

9 Below these chambers *was* the entrance on the east side, as one enters them from the outer court.

9 Below these chambers, as one might enter from the outer court, *was* the east side entrance.

9 And from under these chambers *was* the entry on the east side, as one goeth into them from the utter court.

- "...below these chambers" - best understood in the context of the Temple's architectural layout. The Outer Court was at a lower elevation than the Inner Court, upon which the priestly chambers were built. This suggests the presence of a flight of steps at the base of the complex, providing access to the entry door.

— The verse clarifies that this entry was located on the east side of the shorter block of chambers. With this, the description of the northern chambers concludes.

10 In the thickness of the wall of the courtyard **toward the east**, facing the separate area and facing the building, *there were* chambers.

10 In the thickness of the wall of the court toward the east, facing the separate area and facing the building, *there were* chambers.

10 There were chambers built into the thick part of the wall of the court facing the east; that is, facing the separate area toward the front of the building,

10 The chambers were in the thickness of the wall of the court toward the east, over against the separate place, and over against the building.

- "...toward the east" - the broader context describes the priestly chambers on the south side of the Temple. The rabbis who translated the Hebrew Bible into Greek seem to have understood the verse in this way, as the Septuagint replaces *haqqādîm* ("east") with *haddârôm* ("south").

— This substitution suggests that the verse refers to the priestly chambers located on the south side of the Temple. Another plausible interpretation is that the passage speaks of two distinct sets of chambers: one set located to the east (v10) and another to the south (v11-12). If this is the case, the eastern chambers would be located on the east side of the Inner Court walkway.

11 And the way in front of them *was* like the appearance of the chambers which *were* on the north; **according to their length, so was their width**, and all their exits *were* **according to their building plans and openings**.

11 The way in front of them *was* like the appearance of the chambers which *were* on the north, according to their length so was their width, and all their exits *were* both according to their arrangements and openings.

11 with a passageway in front of them, similar in appearance to the chambers that were on the north, proportional to their length and width, with all of their exits according to their arrangements and doorways.

11 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 10-cubit-wide walkway in front of the southern chambers mirrored the passage to the north.

- "...according to their length, so was their width" - the dimensions of the southern chambers matched those of the northern chambers.

- "...according to their building plans and openings" - emphasizes the consistent design, door placement, and overall layout of the chambers on both sides.

12 Corresponding to the openings of the chambers which were toward the south was an opening at the head of the way, the way in front of the wall toward the east, as one enters them.

12 Corresponding to the openings of the chambers which were toward the south was an opening at the head of the way, the way in front of the wall toward the east, as one enters them.

12 Corresponding to the chamber doorways facing the south was an opening at the beginning of the passage; that is, the passage in front of the corresponding part of the wall facing east as one might enter.

12 And according to the doors of the chambers that were toward the south was a door in the head of the way, even the way directly before the wall toward the east, as one entereth into them.

- The chambers on the south side were identical to those on the north, with an entrance similar to the one described in v9. Instead of reiterating the details of these chambers, the focus of the passage is on illustrating the consistent architectural layout.

(b) Their use by the priests (42:13-14)

13 Then he said to me, "The north chambers *and* the south chambers, which are opposite **the separate area**, they are the holy chambers where the **priests who are near to the LORD shall eat the most holy things**. There they shall set the most holy things, the grain offering, the sin offering, and the guilt offering; for the place is holy.

13 Then he said to me, "The north chambers *and* the south chambers, which are opposite the separate area, they are the holy chambers where the priests who are near to the LORD shall eat the most holy things. There they shall lay the most holy things, the grain offering, the sin offering and the guilt offering; for the place is holy.

13 Then he told me, "The north and south chamber, which are opposite the courtyard, are consecrated areas where the priests who approach the LORD will eat consecrated offerings and lay the consecrated grain offerings, sin offerings, and guilt offerings, because the area is holy.

13 Then said he unto me, The north chambers and the south chambers, which are before the separate place, they be holy chambers, where the priests that approach unto the LORD shall eat the most holy things: there shall they lay the most holy things, and the meat offering, and the sin offering, and the trespass offering; for the place is holy.

- The angel now begins explaining to Ezekiel the first of two purposes for these priestly chambers

- "...the separate area" - *gizra*

- "...priests who are near to the LORD" - the sons of Zadok (Cf. 40:46; 44:15; 48:11)

- "...eat the most holy things" - the first purpose for these priestly chambers was for the priests to consume the most holy things—the portions of sacrifices allotted to them as part of their priestly service. This included the meal-offering (Lev 2:3,10; 10:12), which provided bread, as well as the sin-offering and trespass-offering, which provided meat.
— So these priestly chambers would provide a sacred space where the Zadokite priests could partake of the most holy portions of the sacrifices.

14 When the priests enter, they shall not go out into the outer courtyard from the sanctuary without laying their garments there in which they minister, for they are holy. They shall put on other garments; then they shall approach that which is for the people."

14 When the priests enter, then they shall not go out into the outer court from the sanctuary without laying there their garments in which they minister, for they are holy. They shall put on other garments; then they shall approach that which is for the people."

14 When the priest enters, they will not enter the outer court from the sanctuary without having removed their garments worn during their time of ministry, because they are holy. They will put on different clothes, and then they will approach the area reserved for the people."

14 When the priests enter therein, then shall they not go out of the holy place into the utter court, but there they shall lay their garments wherein they minister; for they are holy; and shall put on other garments, and shall approach to those things which are for the people.

- The second purpose of the priestly chambers is that after completing their duties in the Inner Court or Temple building, the priests must change their clothes and leave their holy garments in these chambers before entering the Outer Court to interact with the people.
— This separation of clothes echoes the instructions in Lev 6:9-11 and ensures that the sanctity of the holy garments is preserved by restricting their use to the sacred spaces of the Temple.

(viii) Outer walls of the Temple (42:15-20)

15 Now when he had **finished measuring the inner house**, he brought me out by way of **the gate which faced east**, and **measured it all around**.

15 Now when he had finished measuring the inner house, he brought me out by the way of the gate which faced toward the east and measured it all around.

15 After he had finished measuring the inner temple, he brought me out through the east-facing gate and measured it all around.

15 Now when he had made an end of measuring the inner house, he brought me forth toward the gate whose prospect is toward the east, and measured it round about.

- "...finished measuring the inner house" - these measurements included the inside of the Temple, the dimensions of both courts, the rear building, and the priestly chambers.
- "...the gate which faced east" - this is the gate where Ezekiel's guided tour of the Temple compound began (Cf. 40:6).
- "...measured it all around" - the angel proceeded to measure the total external dimensions of the entire Temple complex.

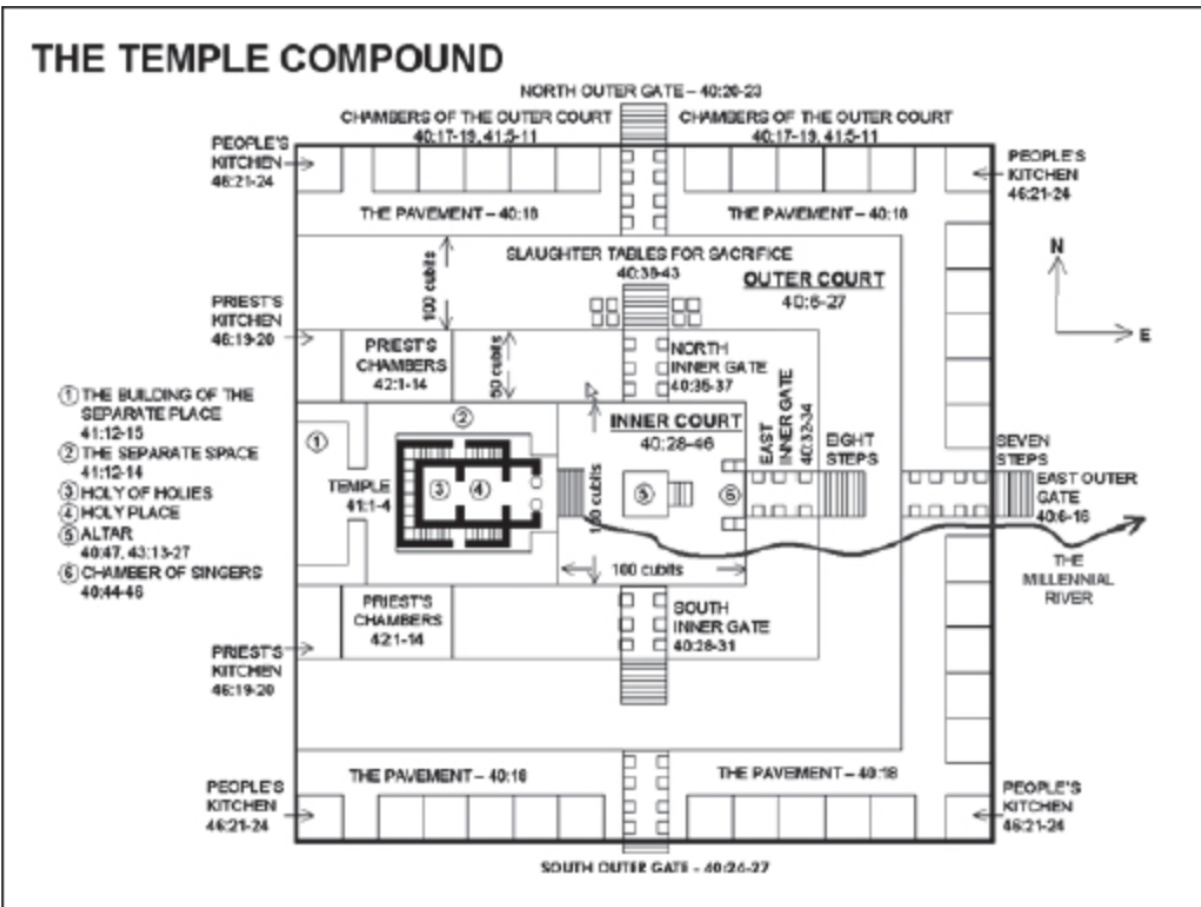
16 He measured on the east side with the measuring rod: **five hundred rods** by the **measuring rod**.

16 He measured on the east side with the measuring reed five hundred reeds by the measuring reed.

16 He measured the east side at 500 reeds, according to the length of the measuring stick,

16 He measured the east side with the measuring reed, five hundred reeds, with the measuring reed round about.

- "...five hundred rods" - equals 5,250 feet, only 30 feet less than a mile (1.6 kilometers)
- "...measuring rod" - or "measuring reed"; according to 40:5, one rod/reed is six cubits, or 126 inches (10 feet 6 inches, 3.2 meters).



- 17 He measured on the north side: five hundred rods by the measuring rod.
- 17 He measured on the north side five hundred reeds by the measuring reed.
- 17 the north side at 500 reeds, according to the length of the measuring stick,
- 17 He measured the north side, five hundred reeds, with the measuring reed round about.
- 18 On the south side he measured five hundred rods with the measuring rod.
- 18 On the south side he measured five hundred reeds with the measuring reed.
- 18 the south side at 500 reeds, according to the length of the measuring stick,
- 18 He measured the south side, five hundred reeds, with the measuring reed.
- 19 He turned to the west side *and* measured five hundred rods with the measuring rod.
- 19 He turned to the west side *and* measured five hundred reeds with the measuring reed.
- 19 and the west side at 500 reeds, according to the length of the measuring stick.
- 19 He turned about to the west side, and measured five hundred reeds with the measuring reed.

20 He measured it on the four sides; it had a wall all around, the length five hundred *rods* and the width five hundred, **to divide between the holy and the common.**

20 He measured it on the four sides; it had a wall all around, the length five hundred and the width five hundred, to divide between the holy and the profane.

20 He measured a wall that encompassed all four sides, 500 hundred long and 500 wide, dividing between the sacred and common areas.

20 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.

- "...five hundred reeds long, and five hundred broad" - almost a square mile; the total area measured 27,562,500 square feet.

- "...to divide between the holy and the common" - the purpose of the Outer Wall was to separate what was sacred from the secular. This division underscores the holiness of the Temple and the distinct role that it will play in the worship and administration of God during the Messianic Age.

