THE TEMPLE PROPER

Ezekiel 41:1-26

1 And he brought me to the temple, and measured the posts, six cubits broad on the one side, and six cubits broad on the other side, which was the breadth of the tabernacle. 2 And the breadth of the entrance was ten cubits; and the sides of the entrance were five cubits on the one side, and five cubits on the other side: and he measured the length thereof, forty cubits, and the breadth, twenty cubits. 3 Then went he inward, and measured each post of the entrance, two cubits; and the entrance, six cubits; and the breadth of the entrance, seven cubits. 4 And he measured the length thereof, twenty cubits, and the
breadth, twenty cubits, before the temple: and he said unto me, This is the most holy place.

5 Then he measured the wall of the house, six cubits; and the breadth of every side-chamber, four cubits, round about the house on every side. 6 And the side-chambers were in three stories, one over another, and thirty in order; and they entered into the wall which belonged to the house for the side-chambers round about, that they might have hold therein, and not have hold in the wall of the house. 7 And the side-chambers were broader as they encompassed the house higher and higher; for the encompassing of the house went higher and higher round about the house: therefore the breadth of the house continued upward; and so one went up from the lowest chamber to the highest by the middle chamber. 8 I saw also that the house had a raised basement round about; the foundations of the side-chambers were a full reed of six great cubits. 9 The thickness of the wall, which was for the side-chambers, on the outside, was five cubits: and that which was left was the place of the side-chambers that belonged to the house. 10 And between the chambers was a breadth of twenty cubits round about the house on every side. 11 And the doors of the side-chambers were toward the place that was left, one door toward the north, and another door toward the south: and the breadth of the place that was left was five cubits round about.

12 And the building that was before the separate place at the side toward the west was seventy cubits broad; and the wall of the building was five cubits thick round about, and the length thereof ninety cubits. 13 So he measured the house, a hundred cubits long; and the separate place, and the building, with the walls thereof, a hundred cubits long; 14 also the breadth of the face of the house, and of the separate place toward the east, a hundred cubits

15 And he measured the length of the building before the separate place which was at the back thereof, and the galleries thereof on the one side and on the other side, a hundred cubits; and the inner temple, and the porches of the court; 16 the thresholds, and the closed windows, and the galleries round about on their three stories, over against the threshold, ceiled with wood round about, and from the ground up to the windows (now the windows were covered), 17 to the space above the door, even unto the inner house, and without, and by all the wall round about within and without, by measure. 18 And it was made with cherubim and palm-trees; and a palm-tree was between cherub and cherub, and every cherub had two faces; 19 so that there was the face of a man toward the palm-tree on the one side, and the face of a young lion toward the palm-tree on the other side. Thus was it made through all the house round about. 20 from the ground unto above the door were cherubim and palm-trees made: thus was the wall of the temple.

21 As for the temple, the door-posts were squared; and as for the face of the sanctuary, the appearance thereof was as the appearance of the temple. 22 The
altar was of wood, three cubits high, and the length thereof two cubits; and the corners thereof, and the length thereof, and the walls thereof, were of wood: and he said unto me, This is the table that is before Jehovah. 23 And the temple and the sanctuary had two doors. 24 And the doors had two leaves apiece, two turning leaves: two leaves for the one door, and two leaves for the other. 25 And there were made on them, on the doors of the temple, cherubim and palm-trees, like as were made upon the walls; and there was a threshold of wood upon the face of the porch without. 26 And there were closed windows and palm-trees on the one side and on the other side, on the sides of the porch: thus were the side-chambers of the house, and the thresholds (ASV, 1901).

Ezekiel is led by the Angel of the Lord into the Temple proper building itself now. He progresses from east to west. East being the side facing the inner court with the entrance doorway which we have identified as a vestibule or hall of sorts. The entrance hall is described with the Hebrew word oolam which is generally the word for tent. Now the complete temple is described as haychal. The first room as Ezekiel enters, the haychal, that he sees is the kodedsh or sanctuary after the Hebrew word for holy. This kodedsh lies between the oolam and the most holy inner chamber called the kodedsh hakodeshiem.
This is the holy of holies or the most inner chamber where the Lord Jesus will reside and conduct the affairs of this world during the one-thousand year Messianic Kingdom.

The sanctuary he saw was forty cubits long (~60 feet) by twenty cubits (30 feet) wide. The gateway that Ezekiel was led through was ten cubits (15 feet) wide leaving room for the doorposts on either side. The two doorposts with the ten cubit gap between them served as the western wall of the entrance vestibule and the eastern was of the Sanctuary. These doorposts were each six cubits wide. The length of the sanctuary or holy place, forty cubits, and the breadth, twenty, were the same as in Solomon’s Temple. The Angel of the Lord then led him to the Holy of Holies.

As he entered the holy of holies: *he measured the post of the door two cubits*: this was the door into the most holy place; there was one in Solomon’s temple too. However in the second temple there was no door. Instead there were two veils, which were torn from top to bottom at the death of Christ. Now the thickness of the post was two cubits, on which this door was hung: *and the door six cubits, and the breadth of the door seven cubits*; this door was a two-leaved one; each leaf consisted of three cubits wide. There was also a post in the middle on which the doors latched onto when they shut. That was one cubit broad, which made a total of seven cubits space. six cubits, totaling twenty cubits; which was the width of the Holy of Holies chamber.

Interestingly the Angel of Jehovah entered this most holy chamber alone for this will be His dwelling place alone. Just as in the Tabernacle and Temples one and two, only the High Priest went in there alone. In those structures though it was only once per year on
the day of atonement, Yom Kippur. Jesus is our King and High Priest. The Angel entered in alone, while the prophet remained outside. There was a door six cubits high and seven cubits broad. The breadth of the door leading into the Holy part was ten cubits, but the door leading into the Most Holy was seven cubits wide, the number which denotes divine perfection. The description of the interior of the temple is given in verses 15–26.

He measured first the wall which surrounded the Holy and the Most Holy part. This wall was six cubits thick. There were also side chambers. Side chambers were also in the temple of Solomon (1 Kings 6:5). Ezekiel sees that the height is three stories and each contains thirty chambers, so there are ninety chambers in all. These three stories with the ninety chambers surrounded the temple on its three sides, the North, West and South sides, the East side being the vestibule and entrance into the temple. Interestingly that were no side chambers above the entrance. These side chambers are recessed into the wall as they were in Solomon’s Temple. 1 Kings 6:6 explains the construction of these chambers: “On the outside he made rebatements in the wall of the house round about, that the beams should not have hold in the wall of the house.” The side chambers in Solomon’s temple were fastened on the temple proper with timber of cedar (1 Kings 6:10). This probably explains the meaning of the attachment of these three stories of chambers in Ezekiel’s temple. The side chambers must therefore be an addition to the wall itself which surrounds the Holy and Most Holy. It is not stated what the use of these ninety chambers will be in the millennial temple. The seventh verse shows that the stories of this addition to the wall, containing the chambers, have galleries surrounding it. There is a gallery of the second story and it is wider than the first level gallery.

And the gallery of the third level is broader than the second story, so that this annex broadens upward. A better rendering of verse 8 is: “And I saw that the house had an elevation round about, the foundations of the side chambers, a full reed, six cubits to the joint.” (To the level place where the side chambers begin). There was then a raised basement on the three sides of the temple and the six cubits correspond to the ten steps (40:49) marking the height of the elevation. The thickness of the wall, which was for the side chambers outside of it was five cubits, besides this there was an open space along the building. “And between the chambers (and the house) was a width of twenty cubits round about the house on every side.” This allowed for the entry of light for these chambers. “And the entry of the side chambers was toward what was left free, one entry toward the North, and one entry toward the South; and the width of the space left free was five cubits round about.” The side chambers were therefore entered from the outside.

As Ezekiel continues his moving description of the facilities he sees a new building. This is behind the temple building toward the West. Its dimensions are seventy cubits broad, ninety cubits long and the wall is five cubits in thickness round about. It is not clear what this building will be used for. It could be for the disposal of the refuse from the sacrifices and other unclean things. No other description is given of this rear building, which is a separate place. Verses 12 and 14 give the total measurement of the house, a hundred cubits, which is the total of the previously given measures.
Ezekiel saw carved cherubim and palm trees which were engraved into the wood that covered the interior of the temple building. The carved cherubim represent the guardians of God’s Heavenly Throne. Palm trees are emblems of that peace and victory. Now there will be world wide peace as the Prince of Peace rules the world’s government in the New Theocracy. These also represent a blessing provided by God. These decorations are similar to those in the Temple build by Solomon (1 Kings 6:29).

The only piece of furniture in the temple proper Ezekiel described was a wooden altar three cubits (4.5 feet) high and two cubits (3 feet) square, called the table that is before the LORD (Ezekiel 41:22).

The entire Holy of Holies was wainscoted with wood. The altar was also of wood. Even though silver and gold were prominently used in the tabernacle and in Solomon’s temple, they are not used here. There is no mention of them in the entire nine chapter description of the Temple and Messianic Kingdom services in Ezekiel 40–48. Both are absent in the millennial temple for what the silver and gold represents in worldly value is now fully realized but better with God in Jesus reigning. The heavenly Jerusalem will gold in it when the Eternal Order is established, but silver is not mentioned in the description of that city in Revelation chapter twenty-one.

The chief ornaments in this temple are cherubim and palm trees; they were along the wall of the temple. So it was in the temple of Solomon. “And he carved all the walls of the house round about with carved figures of cherubim and palm trees and open flowers within and without” (1 Kings 6:29).

A palm tree was between cherub and cherub. As stated in the previous chapter palms are the emblems of victory and remind us of the feast of tabernacles. They were seen high above on the posts. Cherubim represent the protection of the Lord, who enters this house and is worshipped here. But the cherubim here have only two faces and not four as in the opening vision of this book (chapter 1:10–12). These celestial beings represent the Lord Jesus Christ in His personal glory. The lion, His kingly glory; the face of a man, His true humanity; the face of an ox, His servant character; and the face of an eagle, His heavenly origin and destiny, Son of God.

There is a also a direct comparison to the Gospels and the Cherubim.

The linkage of the four aspects of the Cherubim to the Gospels has been recognized since the early Church fathers. The Fathers identified them with the four Gospels,

1. Matthew the lion,
2. Mark the ox,
3. Luke the man,
4. John the eagle:

What is interesting regarding these symbols is that they do not express the personal character of the Evangelists, but the different characteristics of the Lord Jesus our Christ in relation to the world (four being the number referring to the entire world, for
example, the four quarters of the world).

1. The Lion expressing royalty, as Matthew describes this feature of Christ; The Lion of the Tribe of Judah.
2. The Ox, laboring in endurance, which is Christ’s prominent characteristic in Mark.
3. The Man, brotherly sympathy with the whole race of man, Christ’s prominent feature in Luke;

It is meaningful that the face of a man and the face of a young lion are seen on these cherubim in the Messianic Temple as each face looks upon a palm tree. Its symbolical meaning is obvious. The Lord Jesus Christ has come again and will reside in the earth within the temple and appears as the glorified Man as the Lion of the tribe of Judah. His is the victory and the glory. When at last this temple finally is realized and stands in Israel, and its meaning and measurements, as well as other details, will be fully known and understood. We will see then that His blessed work, victory and person are symbolically seen throughout this house.

The altar was of wood, three cubits high and two cubits long. “And he said unto me, This is the table which is before Jehovah.” The altar is the altar of incense. The burnt offering altar is described later in chapter 43:13. In the tabernacle and Solomon’s temple the altar of incense was overlaid with gold. Note also the difference in the measurement. The altar of incense in the tabernacle was two cubits high and one cubit long and broad; the altar in the future temple is three cubits high and two cubits long, nearly double in size. The incense offered upon the altar is the symbol of the fragrance Christ is to God. It also typifies praise and prayer (Psalm 141:2; Revelation 5:8; 8:3); being communion with God it is here called “the table which is before Jehovah.” This will be a blessing to praise and worship God in Christ in this magnificent house of worship.

There were also two doors for the sanctuary with two folding leaves. They were ornamented, like the walls, with cherubim and palm trees.