EZEKIEL 41

The Holy Place: The Table Before the LORD

“And he said to me, ‘This is the table that is before the LORD.’”
EZEKIEL 41:22

Where Ezekiel has brought us

1. Ezekiel 40–48 is one long vision, given “in the twenty-fifth year of our exile” (40:1), about 573 BC, fourteen years after Jerusalem fell.

2. This study reads chapters 40–48 as the temple of the millennial kingdom, a real building yet to stand in Jerusalem, and Guzik holds the same literal view.

The Nave and the Most Holy Place

The guide measures the holy place, then goes into the inner room alone.

EZEKIEL 41:1

Then he brought me to the nave and measured the side pillars; six cubits wide on each side was the width of the side pillar.

DAVID GUZIK

Guzik explains why Ezekiel did not follow the guide into the inner room: he was a priest, but not the high priest, and only the high priest could enter the most holy place, and only once a year (Lev 16:2; Heb…

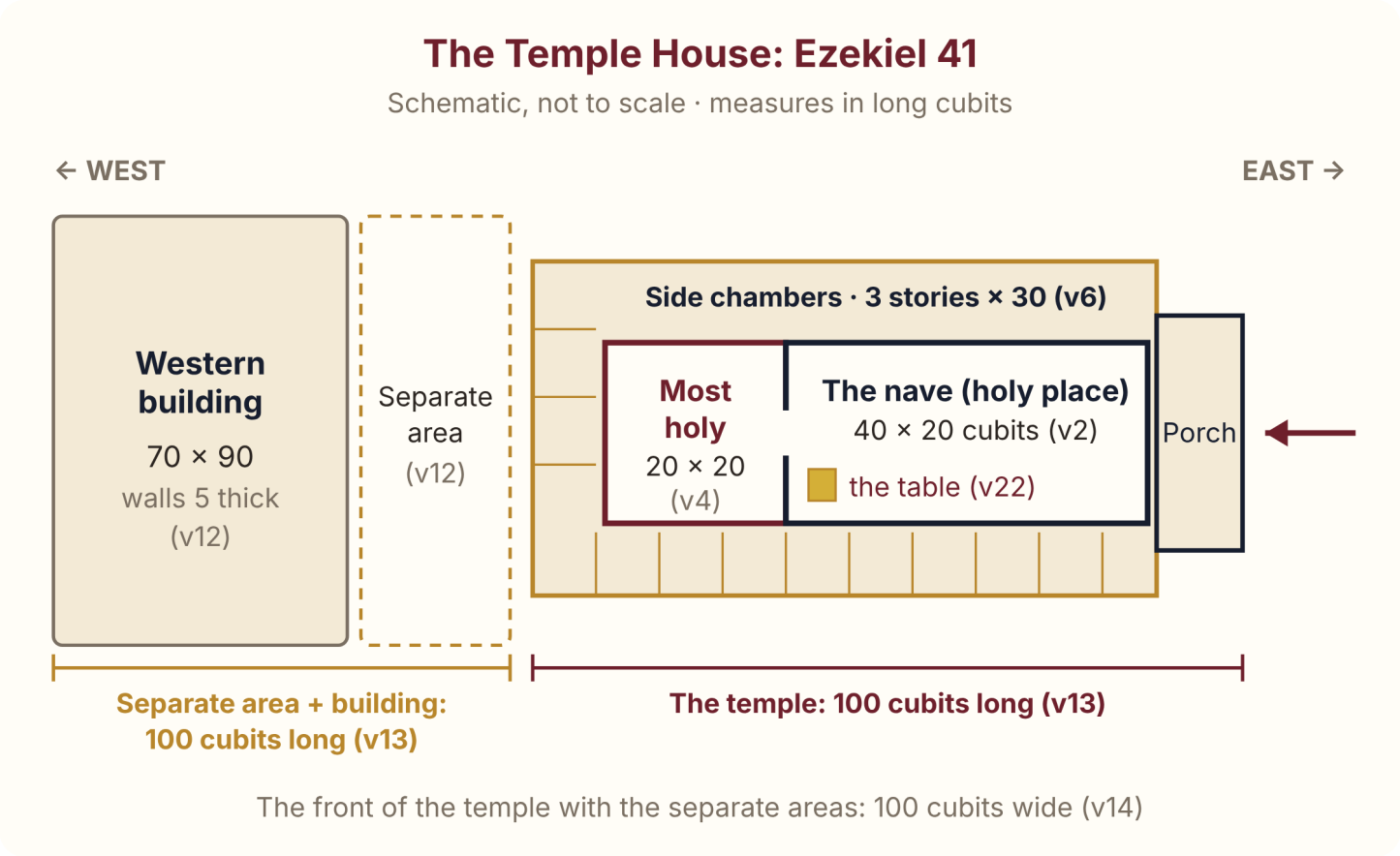
WHAT IT MEANS

God brought Ezekiel as far as a priest could go and let him look in. The guide measured the inner room and told him what it was: the most holy place.

qodesh (קֹדֶשׁ)
QODESH · "HOLINESS, A HOLY THING"

Qodesh means holiness, a holy thing. Doubled, it becomes the 'holy of holies,' the most holy place.

The Temple House (Ezekiel 41)



A schematic plan of the house: the nave, the most holy place, the ring of side chambers, the separate area and the western building, with the measures the guide called out.

Three Stories of Side Chambers

Thick walls and thirty rooms on each of three levels wrap around the house.

EZEKIEL 41:5

Then he measured the wall of the temple, six cubits; and the width of the side chambers, four cubits, all around about the house on every side.

DAVID GUZIK

Guzik admits the section is hard going, and passes on Wright: 'The description of the side rooms (Ezekiel 41:5-11) is difficult to follow.' But the main point is clear.

WHAT IT MEANS

Three stories, thirty rooms on each, walls five and six cubits thick, a foundation raised a full rod (v8). This is a house built to last and built in order.

tselaʿ (צֵלָע)

TSELAʿ · "A SIDE, A RIB"

Tselaʿ means a side or a rib, and here a side room built against the temple. Verse 6 lays out the plan: "The side chambers were in three stories, one above another, and thirty in each story."

A Hundred Cubits Every Way

A western building, a separate area, and a house measured to perfect order.

EZEKIEL 41:12

The building that was in front of the separate area at the side toward the west was seventy cubits wide; and the wall of the building was five cubits thick all around, and its length was ninety cubits.

WHAT IT MEANS

The tour pulls back to take the measure of the whole. A hundred cubits long, a hundred cubits for the yard and building behind it, a hundred cubits across the front (vv13–14).

gizrah (גְּזֵרָה)

GIZRAH · "A SEPARATE PLACE"

Gizrah means a separate place, an enclosed yard. In verse 12 a large building stands "in front of the separate area at the side toward the west," seventy cubits wide and ninety long, with walls five cubits thick.

Cherubim and Palm Trees

Wood paneling carved from floor to ceiling with guardians and with life.

EZEKIEL 41:16

The thresholds, the latticed windows and the galleries round about their three stories, opposite the threshold, were paneled with wood all around, and from the ground to the windows (but the windows were covered),

DAVID GUZIK

Guzik quotes Block on what the carvings mean: 'In these figures aspirations of life and prosperity (palm) and security (cherubim) coalesce.'

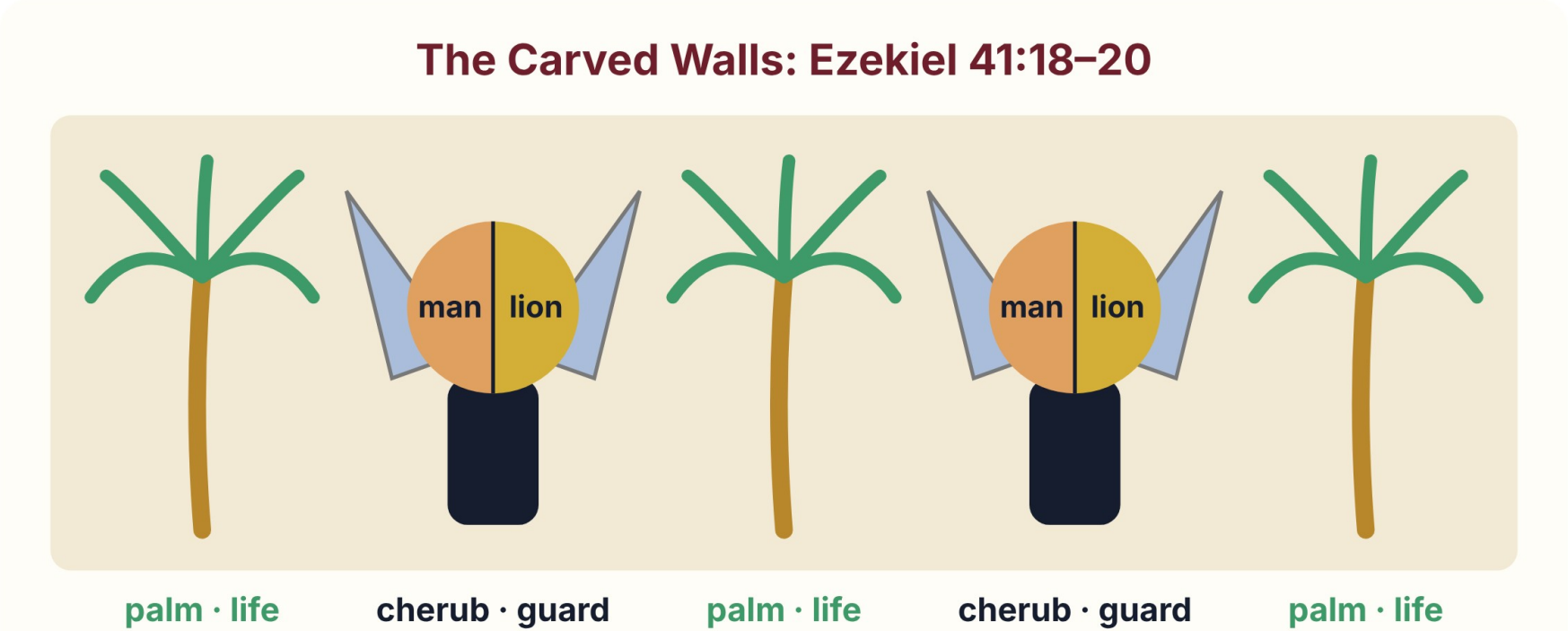
WHAT IT MEANS

Everywhere Ezekiel looked, the same pattern ran around the house: palm, cherub, palm, cherub (vv18–19). Cherubim once stood at the gate of Eden to keep sinners away from the tree of life (Gen 3:24).

kerub (כְּרוּב)
KERUB · "A CHERUB"

A kerub is a cherub, a guardian of God's holiness. Cherubim guarded the way to the tree of life in Eden (Gen 3:24), and Ezekiel had seen living beings with four faces by the river Chebar (1:10; 10:14).

Cherubim and Palm Trees (Ezekiel 41:18–20)



The carved pattern that ran around the whole house: a palm tree between every cherub, and each cherub with a man's face toward one palm and a young lion's face toward the other.

The Table Before the LORD

A small wooden altar at the heart of the house, and doors carved like the walls.

EZEKIEL 41:21

The doorposts of the nave were square; as for the front of the sanctuary, the appearance of one doorpost was like that of the other.

DAVID GUZIK

Guzik identifies the wooden altar as the altar of incense standing in the holy place, picturing the prayers of God's people rising before Him (Ps 141:2; Rev 8:3–4).

WHAT IT MEANS

At the center of the holy place stood no great sacrifice, only a small wooden altar three cubits high, too small for animal offerings, and the guide called it the table that stands before the LORD (v22).

shulchan (שֻׁלְחָן)
SHULCHAN · "A TABLE"

Shulchan is the ordinary word for a table. In verse 22 Ezekiel sees an altar (mizbeach, H4196, a place of offering) made of wood, three cubits high and two long.

What to carry from this chapter

1

He went in alone.

The guide entered the most holy place while Ezekiel, a priest but not the high priest, stayed at the doorway (vv3–4).

2

Same size as Solomon's.

The nave is forty cubits by twenty and the inner room twenty by twenty, the measures of Solomon's temple.

3

No ark, no veil.

The most holy place is measured but nothing inside it is described; it waits for the glory of chapter 43.

4

Not a spiritual building.

Guzik concludes Ezekiel saw a carefully engineered, strongly built structure, with walls thicker than the rooms.

More to carry

5

Holiness doubled.

Qodesh, holiness, doubled gives the ‘holy of holies,’ the most holy place of verse 4.

6

Guardians and life together.

A palm tree stood between every cherub, God's protection and God's fruitfulness side by side (vv18–19).

7

Two faces, not four.

The carved cherubim show a man and a young lion, two of the four faces Ezekiel saw in chapter 1.

8

An altar called a table.

Shulchan means a table: the small wooden altar is named the table that stands before the LORD (v22).

Talk it through

1. Why did the guide go into the most holy place while Ezekiel stayed at the doorway, and what has changed for us?

2. What do the thick walls and ordered rooms tell you about the God who will live in this house?

3. Cherubim and palm trees stand side by side on every wall. Where do you need both God's guarding and God's life right now?

4. The center of the holy place is a table before the LORD. What sits at the center of your house?

5. Where have you rebuilt the walls of your life but left the inner room empty?

CLOSING

Ezekiel stood at the doorway of the most holy place and looked in. Because of Jesus we don't stand outside; the door is open, and it was opened with blood. Come in, and make the table before the LORD the center of your house.

Teaching the Word. Watching the Times. — Smith For Christ

O·I·A study, slides and reflection journal: see the Ezekiel study page.