

Ezekiel's Vision of the Temple Plan and his Temple Tour¹

“Ezekiel’s final vision of an ideal temple (and city, and land; chs. 40–48) forms a counterpart to the vision of chs. 8–11. In each case he is taken on a tour of the structure, but whereas in the earlier vision he discovers abominations and perverted worship, in this final vision all is in readiness for the perpetual dwelling of the glory of the God of Israel. In chs. 8–10 most of the movement centres on the gate structures to the north and finally focuses on the main sacrificial altar, from which central point the slaughtering angels begin their work (9:6b). In this final vision Ezekiel’s tour begins and ends at the East Gate, but passes by the same areas as those he saw in the earlier vision. With the “tour” completed, he is again outside the main East Gate as he senses the approach of the glory of God returning the same way as Ezekiel had seen him go.”

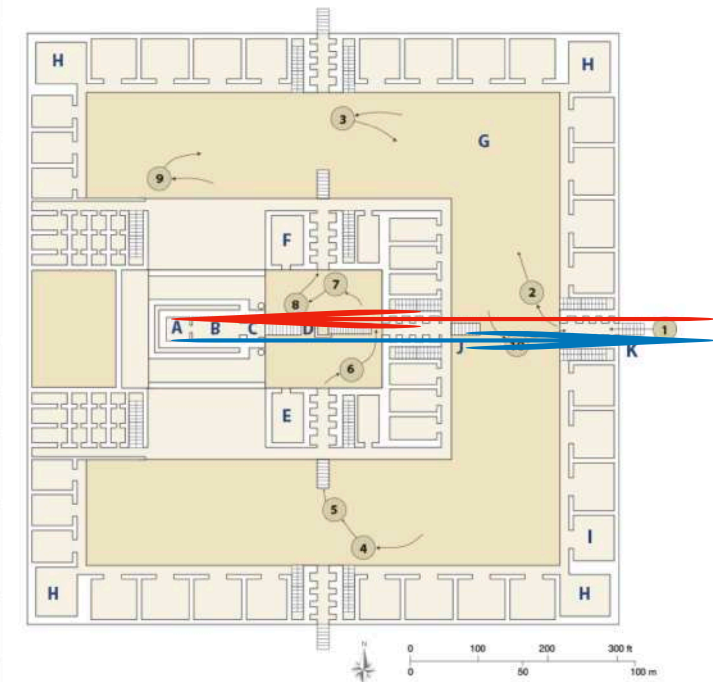
Temple Plan

The labels below are arranged from the innermost, and most sacred, area and moving outward. It must be borne in mind that “temple” can have two quite distinct references: it can refer generally to the entire “temple” complex, including the outer gates and court; in its more “strict” reference the “temple” is the innermost structure itself, which has a single (eastern) entrance and contains the Most Holy Place.

Reference	Explanation
A 41:4	The “Most Holy Place.”
B 41:3	The inner room of the temple.
C 41:2	The entrance to the temple.
D 43:13–17	The imposing altar; although the number of stairs is not given, the entire altar structure is about 16 feet (4.9 m) tall, so many steps would have been required. This area of the inner court was accessible only by priests—not even the prince was permitted entry.
E 40:46	Chamber for Zadokite priests.
F 40:45	Chamber for “priests who have charge of the temple.”
G 40:17–19	The outer court, with its 30 chambers in the outer wall (40:17).
H 46:21–24	The temple “kitchens,” one in each corner of the outer court.
I 40:17	The 30 outer chambers.
J 46:2	The “prince’s gate”: from its threshold he worships on each Sabbath while the priests bring the offerings into the inner court.
K 43:1	The main east gate, through which “the glory of the God of Israel” returns to his temple (see 10:19; 11:22–23).

Temple Tour

Reference	Explanation
1 40:6	The eastern (main) gate begins the tour; the E-W axis of the temple should be noted; if a line is drawn from the east gate to the Most Holy Place, there is a sequence of three elevations, as the space in the inner temple becomes increasingly constricted.
2 40:17	From this vantage point in the outer court, Ezekiel is shown the main features of this “plaza” area.
3 40:20	The northern-facing gate.
4 40:24	En route to the southern-facing gate, no details are given of the outer facade of the inner court; the architectural details of this area must remain speculative.
5 40:28	Ezekiel’s entry to the inner court is by way of its south gate . . .
6 40:32	. . . then to the east gate (past the imposing altar, not yet described) . . .
7 40:35	. . . and on to the north gate, which includes areas for handling sacrificial animals.
8 40:48; 41:1	Ezekiel approaches the inner temple structure itself, first describing its entrance; he is then stationed outside the entrance while his guide first measures its interior; then the exterior.
9 42:1	They exit the inner court through its north gate to explore the northwestern quadrant of the outer court.
10 42:15	Ezekiel and his guide leave the temple from the east gate by which they first entered. From this vantage point, Ezekiel was able to watch the return of “the glory of the God of Israel” moments later (43:1–5).



Letters in the diagram represent locations within the temple complex; numbers indicate the stages in Ezekiel’s temple tour.



The Divine Glory returning to the Temple via the east gate (43:1-5).



“Then he brought me back to the entrance of the temple, there, **water (the life-changing presence of God)** was flowing from below the threshold of the temple towards the east; and the water was flowing down from below the south end of the threshold of the temple, south of the altar.” (47:1). The water continues out of the temple through the south side of the East Gate, through the vicinity of Jerusalem to eventually reach the Dead Sea. As the water goes further from its source (the temple), it becomes both deeper and stronger and never runs dry (47:1-12).

¹ ESV Study Bible, p.1566-1567 (adapted)