

## *Second Baptist Church of Doylestown*

### *Ezekiel Chapter 39-40*

4/6/16

### *Ezekiel Chapter 39*

#### The Defeat of Gog -Verses 1-20

<sup>1</sup> "Son of man, prophesy against Gog and say: 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: I am against you, Gog, chief prince of Meshek and Tubal. <sup>2</sup> I will turn you around and drag you along. I will bring you from the far north and send you against the mountains of Israel. <sup>3</sup> Then I will strike your bow from your left hand and make your arrows drop from your right hand. <sup>4</sup> On the mountains of Israel you will fall, you and all your troops and the nations with you. I will give you as food to all kinds of carrion birds and to the wild animals. <sup>5</sup> You will fall in the open field, for I have spoken, declares the Sovereign LORD. <sup>6</sup> I will send fire on Magog and on those who live in safety in the coastlands, and they will know that I am the LORD. <sup>7</sup> "I will make known my holy name among my people Israel. I will no longer let my holy name be profaned, and the nations will know that I the LORD am the Holy One in Israel. <sup>8</sup> It is coming! It will surely take place, declares the Sovereign LORD. This is the day I have spoken of. <sup>9</sup> "Then those who live in the towns of Israel will go out and use the weapons for fuel and burn them up—the small and large shields, the bows and arrows, the war clubs and spears. For seven years they will use them for fuel. <sup>10</sup> They will not need to gather wood from the fields or cut it from the forests, because they will use the weapons for fuel. And they will plunder those who plundered them and loot those who looted them, declares the Sovereign LORD. <sup>11</sup> "On that day I will give Gog a burial place in Israel, in the valley of those who travel east of the Sea. It will block the way of travelers, because Gog and all his hordes will be buried there. So it will be called the Valley of Hamon Gog. <sup>12</sup> "For seven months the Israelites will be burying them in order to cleanse the land. <sup>13</sup> All the people of the land will bury them, and the day I display my glory will be a memorable day for them, declares the Sovereign LORD. <sup>14</sup> People will be continually employed in cleansing the land. They will spread out across the land and, along with others, they will bury any bodies that are lying on the ground. "After the seven months they will carry out a more detailed search. <sup>15</sup> As they go through the land, anyone who sees a human bone will leave a marker beside it until the gravediggers bury it in the Valley of Hamon Gog, <sup>16</sup> near a town called Hamonah. And so they will cleanse the land.' <sup>17</sup> "Son of man, this is what the Sovereign LORD says: Call out to every kind of bird and all the wild animals: 'Assemble and come together from all around to the sacrifice I am preparing for you, the great sacrifice on the mountains of Israel. There you will eat flesh and drink blood. <sup>18</sup> You will eat the flesh of mighty men and drink the blood of the princes of the earth as if they were rams and lambs, goats and bulls—all of them fattened animals from Bashan. <sup>19</sup> At the sacrifice I am preparing for you, you will eat fat till you are glutted and drink blood till you are drunk. <sup>20</sup> At my table you will eat your fill of horses and riders, mighty men and soldiers of every kind,' declares the Sovereign LORD.

**39:1** The story of the battle continues. The defeat of the evil forces will be final and complete, destroyed by divine intervention. Because of this victory, God's name will be known throughout the world. His glory will be evident, and the nations will understand that he alone is in charge of human history. God will clearly show his love for his people by restoring them to their homeland.

**39:12-16** Two themes are intertwined here: God's total victory over his enemies, and the need to cleanse the land to make it holy. After the final battle, teams will be appointed to give proper burial to the corpses of God's enemies in order to cleanse the land. The land would be defiled by unburied corpses, and those who came in contact with the corpses would be made ceremonially unclean (see Numbers 19:14-16). Yet there will be so many corpses that all kinds of birds will be called upon to help dispose of them (39:17-20). This message is exciting for us: With God on our side, we are assured of ultimate victory over his foes because God will fight on our behalf (see also Zephaniah 3:14-17; Romans 8:38-39).

### **The Restoration of Israel - Verses 21-29**

<sup>21</sup> "I will display my glory among the nations, and all the nations will see the punishment I inflict and the hand I lay on them. <sup>22</sup> From that day forward the people of Israel will know that I am the LORD their God. <sup>23</sup> And the nations will know that the people of Israel went into exile for their sin, because they were unfaithful to me. So I hid my face from them and handed them over to their enemies, and they all fell by the sword. <sup>24</sup> I dealt with them according to their uncleanness and their offenses, and I hid my face from them. <sup>25</sup> "Therefore this is what the Sovereign LORD says: I will now restore the fortunes of Jacob and will have compassion on all the people of Israel, and I will be zealous for my holy name. <sup>26</sup> They will forget their shame and all the unfaithfulness they showed toward me when they lived in safety in their land with no one to make them afraid. <sup>27</sup> When I have brought them back from the nations and have gathered them from the countries of their enemies, I will be proved holy through them in the sight of many nations. <sup>28</sup> Then they will know that I am the LORD their God, for though I sent them into exile among the nations, I will gather them to their own land, not leaving any behind. <sup>29</sup> I will no longer hide my face from them, for I will pour out my Spirit on the people of Israel, declares the Sovereign LORD."

**39:29** Both in this prophecy and in Joel 2:28-29, God promises to pour out his Spirit on his people. The early church believed this began to be fulfilled at Pentecost, when God's Holy Spirit came to live in all believers (Acts 2:1-18).

## *Ezekiel Chapter 40*

### **The Temple Area Restored - Verses 1-4**

<sup>1</sup> In the twenty-fifth year of our exile, at the beginning of the year, on the tenth of the month, in the fourteenth year after the fall of the city—on that very day the hand of the LORD was on me and he took me there. <sup>2</sup> In visions of God he took me to the land of Israel and set me on a very high mountain, on whose south side were some buildings that looked like a city. <sup>3</sup> He took me there, and I saw a man whose appearance was like bronze; he was standing in the gateway with a linen cord and a measuring rod in his hand. <sup>4</sup> The man said to me, "Son of man, look carefully and listen closely and pay attention to everything I am going to show you, for that is why you have been brought here. Tell the people of Israel everything you see."

#### *The East Gate to the Outer Court*

<sup>5</sup> I saw a wall completely surrounding the temple area. The length of the measuring rod in the man's hand was six long cubits, each of which was a cubit and a handbreadth. He measured the wall; it was one measuring rod thick and one rod high. <sup>6</sup> Then he went to the east gate. He climbed its steps and measured the threshold of the gate; it was one rod deep. <sup>7</sup> The alcoves for the guards were one rod long and one rod wide, and the projecting walls between the alcoves

were five cubits thick. And the threshold of the gate next to the portico facing the temple was one rod deep.<sup>8</sup> Then he measured the portico of the gateway;<sup>9</sup> it was eight cubits deep and its jambs were two cubits thick. The portico of the gateway faced the temple.<sup>10</sup> Inside the east gate were three alcoves on each side; the three had the same measurements, and the faces of the projecting walls on each side had the same measurements.<sup>11</sup> Then he measured the width of the entrance of the gateway; it was ten cubits and its length was thirteen cubits.<sup>12</sup> In front of each alcove was a wall one cubit high, and the alcoves were six cubits square.<sup>13</sup> Then he measured the gateway from the top of the rear wall of one alcove to the top of the opposite one; the distance was twenty-five cubits from one parapet opening to the opposite one.<sup>14</sup> He measured along the faces of the projecting walls all around the inside of the gateway—sixty cubits. The measurement was up to the portico facing the courtyard.<sup>15</sup> The distance from the entrance of the gateway to the far end of its portico was fifty cubits.<sup>16</sup> The alcoves and the projecting walls inside the gateway were surmounted by narrow parapet openings all around, as was the portico; the openings all around faced inward. The faces of the projecting walls were decorated with palm trees.

### *The Outer Court*

<sup>17</sup> Then he brought me into the outer court. There I saw some rooms and a pavement that had been constructed all around the court; there were thirty rooms along the pavement.<sup>18</sup> It abutted the sides of the gateways and was as wide as they were long; this was the lower pavement.<sup>19</sup> Then he measured the distance from the inside of the lower gateway to the outside of the inner court; it was a hundred cubits on the east side as well as on the north.

**40:1-49** To the exiles, the rebuilding of the Jerusalem temple envisioned a time of complete restoration, a time when God would return to his people. The temple was rebuilt in the years 520 to 515 B.C. (see Ezra 5-6), but fell significantly short of the grand plan in Ezekiel's vision (Haggai 2:3; Zechariah 4:10). This vision of the temple has been interpreted in four main ways: (1) This is the temple Zerubbabel should have built in 520-515 B.C. and is the actual blueprint God intended. But due to disobedience (43:2-10), it was never followed. (2) This is a literal temple to be rebuilt during the millennial reign of Christ. (3) This temple is symbolic of the true worship of God by the Christian church right now. (4) This temple is symbolic of the future and eternal reign of God when his presence and blessing fill the earth. Whether Ezekiel's temple is to be understood as literal or symbolic, it seems clear that this is a vision of God's final perfect kingdom. This gave hope to the people of Ezekiel's time who had just seen their nation and its temple destroyed with no hope of rebuilding it in the near future. The details given in this vision gave the people a clear sense that what Ezekiel told them actually did come from God and would surely happen in the future.

**40:3-4** Who was this man? He was obviously not a human being, so he may have been the angel in 9:1-11 or one like him. Some say he may have been Christ himself because he speaks as God had been speaking to Ezekiel, calling him "son of man."

### *The North Gate*

<sup>20</sup> Then he measured the length and width of the north gate, leading into the outer court.<sup>21</sup> Its alcoves—three on each side—its projecting walls and its portico had the same measurements as those of the first gateway. It was fifty cubits long and twenty-five cubits wide.<sup>22</sup> Its openings, its portico and its palm tree decorations had the same measurements as those of the gate facing east. Seven steps led up to it, with its portico opposite them.<sup>23</sup> There was a gate to the inner court facing the north gate, just as there was on the east. He measured from one gate to the opposite one; it was a hundred cubits.

### *The South Gate*

<sup>24</sup> Then he led me to the south side and I saw the south gate. He measured its jambs and its portico, and they had the same measurements as the others. <sup>25</sup> The gateway and its portico had narrow openings all around, like the openings of the others. It was fifty cubits long and twenty-five cubits wide. <sup>26</sup> Seven steps led up to it, with its portico opposite them; it had palm tree decorations on the faces of the projecting walls on each side. <sup>27</sup> The inner court also had a gate facing south, and he measured from this gate to the outer gate on the south side; it was a hundred cubits.

### *The Gates to the Inner Court*

<sup>28</sup> Then he brought me into the inner court through the south gate, and he measured the south gate; it had the same measurements as the others. <sup>29</sup> Its alcoves, its projecting walls and its portico had the same measurements as the others. The gateway and its portico had openings all around. It was fifty cubits long and twenty-five cubits wide. <sup>30</sup> (The porticoes of the gateways around the inner court were twenty-five cubits wide and five cubits deep.) <sup>31</sup> Its portico faced the outer court; palm trees decorated its jambs, and eight steps led up to it. <sup>32</sup> Then he brought me to the inner court on the east side, and he measured the gateway; it had the same measurements as the others. <sup>33</sup> Its alcoves, its projecting walls and its portico had the same measurements as the others. The gateway and its portico had openings all around. It was fifty cubits long and twenty-five cubits wide. <sup>34</sup> Its portico faced the outer court; palm trees decorated the jambs on either side, and eight steps led up to it. <sup>35</sup> Then he brought me to the north gate and measured it. It had the same measurements as the others, <sup>36</sup> as did its alcoves, its projecting walls and its portico, and it had openings all around. It was fifty cubits long and twenty-five cubits wide. <sup>37</sup> Its portico faced the outer court; palm trees decorated the jambs on either side, and eight steps led up to it.

**40:1-49** One argument against the view that Ezekiel's temple is a literal building of the future is that sacrifices are mentioned (40:38-43). If the sacrifices were to be reinstated in the last days, then Christ's final sacrifice would not have been final. The New Testament makes it clear that Christ died once and for all (Romans 6:10; Hebrews 9:12; 10:10, 18). Our sins have been removed; no further sacrifice is needed. In Ezekiel's day, however, the only kind of worship the people knew was the kind that revolved around the sacrifices and ceremonies described in the books Exodus through Deuteronomy. Ezekiel had to explain the new order of worship in terms the people would understand. The next nine chapters tell how the temple is the focal point of everything, showing that the ideal relationship with God is when all of life centers on him.

### *The Rooms for Preparing Sacrifices*

<sup>38</sup> A room with a doorway was by the portico in each of the inner gateways, where the burnt offerings were washed. <sup>39</sup> In the portico of the gateway were two tables on each side, on which the burnt offerings, sin offerings and guilt offerings were slaughtered. <sup>40</sup> By the outside wall of the portico of the gateway, near the steps at the entrance of the north gateway were two tables, and on the other side of the steps were two tables. <sup>41</sup> So there were four tables on one side of the gateway and four on the other—eight tables in all—on which the sacrifices were slaughtered. <sup>42</sup> There were also four tables of dressed stone for the burnt offerings, each a cubit and a half long, a cubit and a half wide and a cubit high. On them were placed the utensils for slaughtering the burnt offerings and the other sacrifices. <sup>43</sup> And double-pronged hooks, each a handbreadth long, were attached to the wall all around. The tables were for the flesh of the offerings.

**40:38-39** The washing of the sacrifices was done according to the standards of preparation established in Leviticus 1:6-9. This washing was part of the process of presenting an acceptable sacrifice to God.

### *The Rooms for the Priests*

<sup>44</sup> Outside the inner gate, within the inner court, were two rooms, one at the side of the north gate and facing south, and another at the side of the south gate and facing north. <sup>45</sup> He said to me, "The room facing south is for the priests who guard the temple, <sup>46</sup> and the room facing north is for the priests who guard the altar. These are the sons of Zadok, who are the only Levites who may draw near to the LORD to minister before him." <sup>47</sup> Then he measured the court: It was square—a hundred cubits long and a hundred cubits wide. And the altar was in front of the temple.

### **The New Temple**

<sup>48</sup> He brought me to the portico of the temple and measured the jambs of the portico; they were five cubits wide on either side. The width of the entrance was fourteen cubits and its projecting walls were three cubits wide on either side. <sup>49</sup> The portico was twenty cubits wide, and twelve cubits from front to back. It was reached by a flight of stairs, and there were pillars on each side of the jambs.

**40:1-49** Ezekiel explained God's dwelling place in words and images the people could understand. God wanted them to see the great splendor he had planned for those who lived faithfully. This kind of temple was never built, but it was a vision intended to typify God's perfect plan for his people—the centrality of worship, the presence of the Lord, the blessings flowing from it, and the orderliness of worship and worship duties. Don't let the details obscure the point of this vision: One day all those who have been faithful to God will enjoy eternal life with him. Let the majesty of this vision lift you and teach you about the God you worship and serve.

**40:1-43:27** This vision came to Ezekiel in 573 B.C. Chapters 40-43 give the temple's measurements and then describe how it would be filled with God's glory. Because Ezekiel was a priest, he would have been familiar with the furnishings and ceremonies of Solomon's temple. As in Revelation 11:1-2, the command to "measure" defines the areas God has marked out for special use. As you read all these details, remember that God is sovereign over all our worship and over the timetable for restoring the faithful to himself.