

## ***The Church of the Servant King***

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### **Prophecy Series**

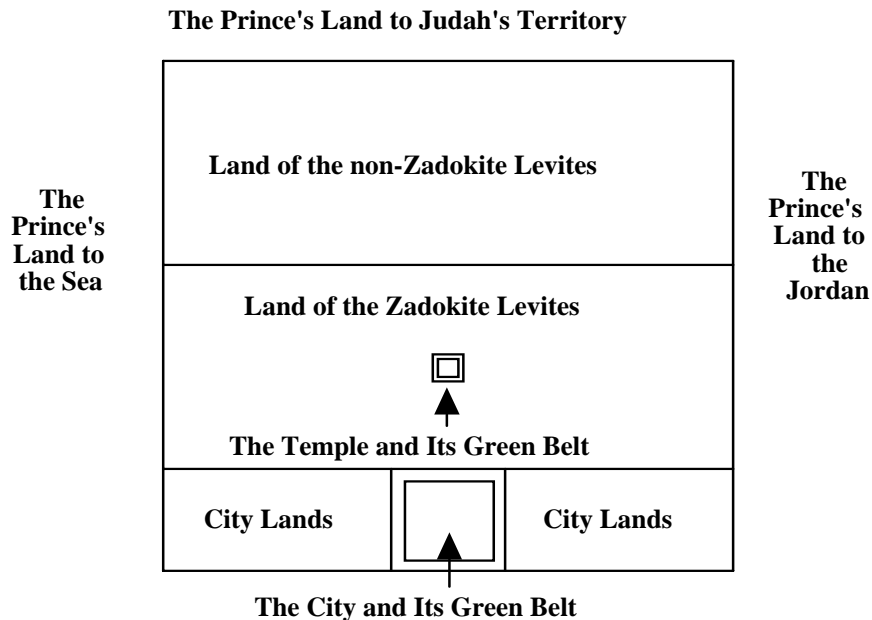
(Proph17F\_Ezekiel 40 to 48\_Part 2\_Offering Regulations and Topology in the Millennium)

After providing Ezekiel detailed descriptions of the Temple and Temple precincts and a description of the laws governing the priests (44.10-31), God gives Ezekiel prophetic instruction relating to the division of some of the Promised Land during the Kingdom. In 45.1-12, the land that will be apportioned for use by the Temple priests is described in a level of detail that does not correlate to anything that has occurred in the past.

Note that the priests are not said to own the land; however, they may use the land. This is consistent with the statement in 44.28 that the priests will have no inheritance in the Land since they would be dedicated to the Lord and He will provide for their needs.

Additional information and detail is provided later in chapter 48 regarding the division of the Land among all of the tribes of Israel. A section of that chapter, i.e. 48.9-12, is devoted to the holy district that is first introduced here in chapter 45.

### ***The Holy District of Jerusalem and the Property of the City and the Prince (45.1-9 cf. 48.9-22)***



**Verses 1-6** – In these verses Ezekiel introduces the Holy District that is to be set apart for the Lord and those that minister to Him as representatives of the people. It consists of three sections.

*Section #1 – the Zadokite section.* This section (vv. 1-4) is 25,000 cubits in length (43,750 feet or ~8.3 miles) by 10,000 cubits in width (17,500 feet or ~3.3 miles). This section is

the residence of the Zadokites, i.e. the sons of Zadok – that portion of the Levitical line that remained faithful to Solomon (see Ezek 44.15ff).<sup>1</sup>

In the center of this section of the holy district (i.e. the Zadokite section) is the plot of land on which the Temple precincts are located. Its dimensions are 500 rods square (~ 5,250 feet X 5,250 feet or almost a mile square) with 50 cubits (875 feet) of open space surrounding the Temple precincts (v. 2).

*Section #2 – the non-Zadokite section.* In verse 5 Ezekiel describes a second section of equal dimensions to the first section that will belong to the Levites (i.e. the non-Zadokite Levites) who serve in the Temple rituals. It will be adjacent to the section just described.

Under the Mosaic Law, the priests and the Levites lived in scattered fashion throughout Israel among the people. In the Millennial kingdom, they will live in close proximity to the Temple. This has never happened in the history of Israel.

*Section #3 – the section for the city.* The city of Jerusalem is allotted a section of the 8.3 X 8.3 mile square of land that surrounds the Temple (v. 6). The dimensions of this section are described as 25,000 cubits (8.3 miles) X 5,000 cubits (~1.75 miles). Later, Ezekiel offers more clarification regarding this 8.3 X 1.75 mile section of Land. The city itself is just to the south of the Temple and all of Israel will have access to the city of Jerusalem. The city suburbs (city lands) will flank this portion on the east and west (cf. 48.17-22).

That central portion will also include the city of Jerusalem and its suburbs. The city will be laid out as a square 7,875 feet (250 cubits) on each side and will cover approximately 2.2 square miles (48:16). Jerusalem will be surrounded by a band of land 437 ½ feet (250 cubits) wide, which will serve as pastureland for flocks and herds belonging to people living in the city (v. 17). On either side of the city proper will be two portions of land 3.3 miles (10,000 cubits) long (v. 18) and 1.65 miles (5,000 cubits) wide (cf. v. 15). This farmland will be cultivated to supply food for the workers of the city.<sup>2</sup>

It is important to note that the Temple itself is located outside of the city of Jerusalem, just to the north of the city. The two sections of land devoted to the Levitical priests (Zadokite and non-Zadokite) are approximately 8.3 miles X 6.6 miles in dimension (i.e. two sections that are ~ 8.3 miles X 3.3 miles). Merrill Unger offers some interesting and perhaps speculative insight into the holy district and its proximity to the city.

The temple itself would be located in the middle of this square (and not in the city of Jerusalem), upon a very high mountain, which will be miraculously made ready for that purpose when the temple is to be erected. This shall be “the mountain of Jehovah’s house,” established upon the “top of the mountain” and “exalted above the hills,” into which all nations shall flow (Isa.2:4; Mic. 4:1-4; Ez. 37:26). Ezekiel gives the picture in chapter 37, verse 27: “My tabernacle also shall be with

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<sup>1</sup> The sons of Zadok were the descendants of the priest Zadok in the Levitical line who remained faithful when others did not (see 1 Sam 2.27-36; 2 Sam 8.17; 15.24-29; 1 Kin 2.26-35; 1 Chron 6.7, 8, 50-53). Zadok was appointed chief priest during Solomon’s reign because he faithfully supported Solomon as king (cf. 1 Kings 1.32-35; 2.26-27, 35).

<sup>2</sup> Charles H. Dyer, “Ezekiel” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary – Old Testament*, John Walvoord and Roy Zuck, editors (Wheaton, Illinois: Victor Books, 1983), 1316.

[“over” or “above”] them ...” The prophet sees the magnificent structure on a grand elevation commanding a superb view of all the surrounding country.<sup>3</sup>

**Verses 7-8** – The land belonging to the “prince” is described in these verses. We’ve dealt with theories regarding the identity of this “prince” of Israel when we examined his first mention by Ezekiel in 44.3. As we have seen, this “prince” will not be the Messiah, nor is it likely that he is David in resurrected body since the prince makes a sacrificial offering for himself (45.22). It is possible that this “prince” is a member of the Zadokite line of Levitical priests and serves as an ambassador or agent between the Zadokite priests and either the resurrected King David or Jesus Himself. His exact role apart from the duties mentioned in Scripture is not known based upon existing revelation contained in Scripture.

This “prince” of Israel will receive a special land allotment to the west and east of the city (cf. 48.8-22) and since tribal territories are described as bordering this allotment to its north and south (48.1-29), the east and west border suggests that the allotment extends to the Dead Sea and the Mediterranean Sea, respectively. This arrangement will contribute to the equitable governing of the Israelites and will discourage Israel’s leadership from oppressing the people (cf. 11.1-13; 14.1-11, 20-22; 34.1-10). This “prince” and Israel’s rulers during the Kingdom era will not be greedy for riches and real estate, but will give the land that remains to the people – actions that contrast with those of previous rulers of Israel to whom Ezekiel alluded (see 1 Sam 8.10-18; 1 Kin. 20.21; Isa 3.13-23; Mic 3.1-4; 7.3; Zeph 3.3).

#### ***Regulations for offerings and Feast Days (45.9-46.24)***

This section contains seven subsections which all deal with the same basic subject. These sections flow according to the following outline:

- An exhortation to Israel’s leaders (45.9-12)
- Offerings for the prince (45.13-17)
- Regulations for the feasts (45.18-25)
- Worship on the Sabbath and new moon days (46.1-8)
- Worship during the annual feasts (46.9-15)
- The gifts of the prince (46.16-18)
- The priests’ kitchens (46.19-24)

#### ***An Exhortation to Israel’s Leaders (45.9-12)***

The mention of the equity and fairness that will be incorporated into the fabric of Jerusalem and Israel’s political, social and religious infrastructure during the Millennium causes Ezekiel to exhort the then captive Israelites to learn from the example of corrupt leadership and society that led them to their present state – captivity in Babylon. The leaders (“princes”) of Israel had abused their positions of authority for personal enrichment. They destroyed the people and appropriated their property.

*Principle:* Where property rights are not recognized in a society, injustice, loss of freedom and slavery is the order of the day.<sup>4</sup>

As we have seen in our study of prophetic passages in the Old Testament, the cry for justice, fairness and righteousness is a common theme. Ezekiel continues this theme with some

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<sup>3</sup> Merrill F. Unger, “The Temple Vision of Ezekiel,” *Bibliotheca Sacra*, 105:423 (October, 1948), 428-429.

<sup>4</sup> For an excellent book that should be required reading in our school systems and that develops this principle at great length, see Thomas J. DiLorenzo, *How Capitalism Saved America, The Untold History of Our Country, From The Pilgrims to the Present* (New York: Crown Forum, 2004) – 289 pages.

examples from units of measure common in that day. An “ephah” is a dry measure and a “bath” is a measure for liquid. Both are equivalent units of measure. He also indicates that weight units of measure should be fair.

- An “ephah” (about ½ bushel or about 8 quarts) should always be a tenth of an homer (about 5 to 6 bushels or about 40 gallons)
- A “bath” should always be a tenth of a homer
- One shekel (about 2/5<sup>th</sup> of an ounce) should equal 20 gerahs (about 1/50<sup>th</sup> of an ounce).
- Sixty shekels should equal one mina (about one and a quarter pounds)

It is easy to see that units of measure in the ancient near East were not as accurate as today’s measures. This created even greater opportunity for fraudulent dealings and unfair business practices.

#### *Offerings to the Prince (45:13-17)*

This “prince” of Israel will serve under the ultimate ruler in the Millennium, the Messiah or possibly even the Messiah’s representative, the resurrected King David. The “prince” will oversee temple offerings among his other responsibilities. The offerings described in these verses are offerings he receives in a mediatorial fashion (v. 17), i.e. the “prince” receives the offerings from the people, then presents the offerings to the Lord Jesus Christ on behalf of the people. Unlike the princes and rulers of Ezekiel’s day leading up the captivity in Babylon, this millennial “prince” will be just and truthful with the people (v. 8).

The Mosaic Law also included extended instructions regarding sacrifices (e.g. Ex 25.2-7; 30.13-15; 35.4-29; 36.2-7; Lev 1.4; 9.7; 10.17) and feasts (e.g. Lev 23.1-44; Num 28.29) during the Age of Israel. However, even though there are similarities between the rituals, sacrifices, offerings, etc. required by the Mosaic Law and their counterparts during the Messianic Kingdom era, there are also differences that distinguish them.<sup>5</sup>

The glorious vision of Ezekiel reveals that it is impossible to locate its fulfillment in any past temple or system which Israel has known, but it must await a future fulfillment after the second advent of Christ when the millennium is instituted. The sacrificial system is not a reinstated Judaism, but the establishment of a new order that has as its purpose the remembrance of the work of Christ on which all salvation rests. The literal fulfillment of Ezekiel’s prophecy will be the means of God’s glorification and man’s blessing in the millennium.<sup>6</sup>

The Lord specified that the people should bring a sixth of an ephah (one-twelfth of a bushel) of wheat or barley taken out of each homer (five to six bushels) they possessed. If their offering was oil it should be a tenth of a bath (about 6 gallons) taken from each of their cors (about 60 gallons). Ten baths (about 60 gallons liquid measure) were about the same quantity as an homer (about 6 bushels dry measure). They were also to offer one sheep fed on Israel’s well-watered pastures out of every 200 they owned. These were the quantities they were to offer in their grain, burnt, and peace offerings to make atonement for themselves on the occasions that follow (cf. Lev. 9:7; 10:17).<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> For a good analysis of this topic, see J. Dwight Pentecost’s discussion in *Things to Come*, 517-531 in which he addresses the questions “Will there be literal sacrifices in the Millennium?”, “Is the Mosaic order re-established?”, What are “the purposes of the sacrifices?”, and finally, he addresses some of the objections to the answers he poses.

<sup>6</sup> Pentecost, *Things to Come*, 531.

<sup>7</sup> Thomas Constable, Expository Notes – “Ezekiel,” ([www.soniclight.com](http://www.soniclight.com)) 2002 edition.

The prince would make these offerings on behalf of the people on special occasions – feasts, new moon celebrations and special Sabbaths. These sacrifices will serve at least a two-fold purpose: 1) a memorial; and 2) a means of restoration to fellowship. They do not provide salvation for the kingdom age believer any more than the sacrifices according to the Mosaic system during the Age of Israel provided salvation (Heb 10.10).

#### *Regulations for the Feasts (45.18-25)*

The festivals or feasts associated with these ritual offerings are described. They include the New Year feast (vv. 18-20), the Passover/Unleavened Bread feast (vv. 21-24), and the seven-day feast of Tabernacles (v. 25).

- The *New Year's feast* – this feast is designed for the celebration and dedication of a New Year (Nisan 1 – approximately mid-April) by purification of the sanctuary (v. 18). A second purification ritual for unintentional sins is to be offered on the 7<sup>th</sup> of the month. It is possible that this feast and purification sacrifice will replace the Day of Atonement in the Mosaic Law (Lev 23.26-32). *Purpose*: Purification, dedication.
- The *Passover/Unleavened Bread* feast – this feast will last for seven days and the “prince” will provide the sacrifices – one bull and one goat per day plus a grain and oil offering (v. 24). The measure of grain – one ephah (~ ½ bushel to a bushel, depending upon the source consulted) for each bull and each goat offered. The measure of oil – one “hin” (~ ½ quart to a gallon, depending upon the source consulted) for each ephah. *Purpose*: Memorial.
- The seven day *feast of Tabernacles* – this feast begins on the 15<sup>th</sup> day of the seventh month and the cycle of offerings made during the Passover/Unleavened Bread feast are repeated here. *Purpose*: Celebration.

This feast corresponds to the seven-day feast of Tabernacles under the Mosaic system (cf. Lev. 23:39-43; Num. 29:12-38). In the Millennium it will undoubtedly be a celebration of God's faithfulness in bringing the Israelites securely and permanently into the Promised Land, which the feast of Tabernacles anticipated.<sup>8</sup>

A question arises as to why Ezekiel omitted the other national feasts for Israel – the Feast of Pentecost, the Feast of Trumpets, and the Day of Atonement?

- The *Feast of Pentecost* was associated with the Passover since it was celebrated exactly 50 days after the Passover. The Passover was a celebration of God's deliverance of His chosen nation and Pentecost was a celebration of the harvest and included an offering of the first fruits of this harvest. While Scripture does not attach any historical significance or meaning to this festival of Pentecost, it is possible that it was designed to be a celebration of God providing a harvest once Israel reached the Promised Land in faith – a fact that is a reality during the Millennium, therefore perhaps deemed no longer necessary.
- The *Feast of Trumpets* pointed to the regathering of Israel to her homeland – a fact that is a reality during the Millennium, therefore perhaps deemed no longer necessary.
- The *Day of Atonement* was designed under the Mosaic system to deal with those sins and defilements that remained unacknowledged in spite of all of the other sacrifices, thus it was necessary to cover for sin in anticipation of the offering of the Messiah. Since the Messiah had come and provided complete expiation for sin in His death, then perhaps this festival was not necessary any longer since complete expiation for sin will have been accomplished.

Consider the following explanation from Charles Dyer in The Bible Knowledge Commentary:

Why did Ezekiel omit Israel's other national feasts, the Feast of Pentecost, the Feast of trumpets, and the Day of Atonement? Two explanations may be given.

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<sup>8</sup> Constable, 209-210.

First, he may have been signaling a change in God's program for Israel. The inauguration of the New Covenant and the fulfillment of Israel's kingdom promises may render those three feasts unnecessary. Thus only three of the six annual feasts under the Levitical system (cf. Lev. 23:4-44) will be followed: two feasts celebrating national cleansing (Passover and Unleavened Bread combined as one feast...), which will point back to Christ's death, and the Feast of Tabernacles that will symbolize Israel's new position in God's millennial kingdom. Second, perhaps Ezekiel employed a figure of speech known as a merism to include all the feasts. By naming the first two feasts in Israel's festal calendar (Passover and Unleavened Bread) and the last one (Tabernacles), maybe he implied that all Israel's feasts would be reinstated.<sup>9</sup>

A strong argument against the second line of reasoning (i.e. the merism) mentioned above is that it is a bad interpretive practice to assume that the writer intended something that he did not state, especially when so much detail characterizes this portion of Ezekiel.<sup>10</sup>

## Chapter 46

### *Worship on the Sabbath and New Moon Days (46.1-8)*

This section has three subcomponents: 1) Protocol for the priests & the prince on the Feast Days (46:1-3); 2) the burnt offering made by the "Prince" on the Sabbath (46.4-6); and 3) Offering on the day of the New Moon (46.6-8).

- *Protocol for the priests & the "Prince" on Feast Days (vv. 1-3)* – the eastern inner gateway is closed 6 working days and is opened only on the Sabbath and on the day of the New Moon festival. An exception to this rule is given in verse 12 – when the "prince" makes a voluntary offering. The "prince" will enter the eastern inner gateway and will stand by the gateposts, evidently to present the offerings to the priests. The "prince" cannot actually enter the Inner Court of the Temple, but he will stand in the vestibule and will be able to observe the priests' within the Inner Court as they perform the sacrificial rituals. The priests prepare burnt offerings & peace offerings and worship at the threshold of the gate. At the conclusion of these events, the priests will exit, but the gate is not shut until evening. The people will worship at the east inner gateway on the Sabbath and the New Moon festivals.

Observance of the sabbath day in the future, as was true in Israel's past, will remind the Israelites of God's creation of the cosmos, His creation of their nation, and His provision of rest (in the Messiah). The new moon (month) celebrations may be periodic reminders of God's providential control of nature and His faithful provision of His people's needs, as they were in the past.<sup>11</sup>

- *The burnt offering made by the "Prince" on the Sabbath (vv. 4-6)* – This offering will consist of 6 lambs plus one ram without blemish. These offerings will also include a grain offering equivalent to 1 ephah (~ ½ bushel to a bushel depending upon the source consulted) for a ram plus as much grain as is desired for the lambs. The grain offering will be accompanied by 1 hin (~ ½ quart or 1 gallon depending upon the source consulted) of oil for every ephah. The offerings prescribed for the Sabbath are a variation from what was prescribed in the Mosaic Law (see Num 28.9-10 – two lambs plus two-

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<sup>9</sup> Charles H. Dyer, "Ezekiel" in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary – Old Testament*, 1312.

<sup>10</sup> Constable, 210.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.



tenths of an ephah of grain mixed with oil). Perhaps the grain and oil offerings symbolized the gracious provision of the Lord for His people.

- *The Offering on the day of the New Moon (vv. 6-8)* – this offering will consist of a young bull, six lambs and one ram, all without blemish. These offerings will be accompanied by a grain offering equivalent to 1 ephah (~ ½ bushel to a bushel, depending upon the source consulted) for a bull, 1 ephah for a ram and as much grain as is desired for the lambs. All of the grain offerings will be accompanied by one hin (~ ½ quart to a gallon, depending upon the source consulted) of oil with every ephah. This offering too is somewhat different from the requirement specified in the Mosaic Law (Num 28.11-15 – two young bulls, one ram, and seven lambs plus three-tenths of an ephah of fine flour mixed with oil for each bull, two-tenths of an ephah of grain mixed with oil for each ram, and one-tenth of an ephah of grain mixed with oil for each lamb).

#### *Worship During the Annual Feasts (46.9-15)*

This section of the passage has three subcomponents: 1) Protocol for the people on feast days (46.9-11); 2) Voluntary offerings from the prince (46.12); 3) Daily offerings (46.13-15).

- *Protocol for the people on feast days* – the worshipers will follow an orderly protocol for worship in the Temple complex on feast days. Those who enter the north gate will exit the south gate and those who enter the south gate will exit the north gate. (Compare this orderliness to 1 Cor 14.26, 33, 40). Evidently, the “Prince” will enter and exit with them, thus setting an example of humility as the leader of the people. What a contrast to the leaders that the people of Ezekiel’s generation and earlier had observed. For all of the festivals and feast days, the grain offering will be an ephah for a bull, an ephah for a ram and an as desired offering for the lambs. Each grain offering will be accompanied by a hin of oil for every ephah.
- *Voluntary offerings from the prince* – the “Prince” will evidently be allowed to make voluntary offerings. The “Prince” will use the east gate. He will prepare burnt offerings and peace offerings as on the Sabbath. The gate is shut after he exits. The Mosaic Law also allowed for voluntary or freewill offerings (Lev 22.17-30).
- *Daily offerings* – daily offerings will be required to be made every morning. The daily offering will be a burnt offering to the Lord and will be a Lamb without blemish prepared every morning plus a grain offering consisting of one-sixth of an ephah. The grain offering will be accompanied by one-third of a hin of oil.

Its purpose is probably to demonstrate the daily rededication of the people to the Lord, the meaning of the daily burnt offering under the Mosaic system. Under the Mosaic Law, there was a daily morning and evening sacrifice (cf. Num. 28:3-4).<sup>12</sup>

Then Ezekiel mentioned the morning sacrifice, but not the evening sacrifice (cf. Ex 29.38-41). This omission could be explained by the fact that he was giving only the highlights of the sacrificial system. So by listing the morning sacrifices he may have assumed that his readers would apply the same regulations to the evening sacrifice.<sup>13</sup>

#### *The Gifts of the “Prince” (46.16-18)*

The “prince” will have certain restrictions placed upon his giving of gifts from his inheritance – i.e. God’s sovereign allotment of land and possessions to him previously described (45.6-8). He is allowed to give gifts of his inheritance to his sons and they can keep the gift as their own as an inheritance. The “prince” can also give gifts to his servants; however, they must return the gifts during the year of “liberty.” God’s purpose in imposing these regulations is so that

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<sup>12</sup> Constable, 211.

<sup>13</sup> Dyer, “Ezekiel” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, 1312.

all Israelites from all tribes will be able to own property. Israel's leaders and people in the past had appropriated other people's property as their own (cf. 45:8-9; 2 Sam. 24:24; 1 Kings 21:19; Mic. 2:1-2).

This year [year of liberty] would evidently be similar to the year of jubilee (every fiftieth year) under the Mosaic Covenant (cf. Lev. 25:10; 27:24). Its purpose, in the past and in the future, is to remind God's people that He owns everything and that they only occupy and possess what He has entrusted to them.<sup>14</sup>

#### *The Priest's Kitchens (46.19-24)*

In his vision, Ezekiel is evidently transported to one of the buildings on the western end of the temple complex designed for the use of the priests. This place is akin to a kitchen for the priests. In it, they boil the trespass offering and the sin offering. They also bake the grain offering here. Evidently, the priests prepared their offerings in these buildings so they would not have to enter the outer court, thereby keeping the sacrifices a thing set apart from those on whose behalf the sacrifice was prepared.

In verses 21-24, the setting switches to the outer court where Ezekiel observes that each of the four corners of the outer court has a kitchen court of sorts. Evidently, the non-Zadokite priests who perform administrative duties in the Temple will use these kitchens to boil the sacrifices of the people. Both the priests and the people will evidently be allowed to eat a certain portion of the sacrifices for themselves. The people will enjoy fellowship with God through the acts of worship performed in the Temple as well as fellowship with each other through sharing a meal.

### **Chapter 47**

God promised Abraham that He would give a particular piece of real estate to his descendants (Gen. 12:7). Later He reiterated this promise and became more specific about its boundaries (Gen. 15:7, 18-21; 17:8; Num. 34:1-12). He also told the Israelites that they would only be able to occupy the land to the extent that they followed Him faithfully (Deut. 7:12; 8:2). If they proved unfaithful, He would not only limit their possession of the land but even drive them out of it (Deut. 28). Ezekiel prophesied that God would bring the Israelites back into the land (36:24-30). He would give them a different attitude, and they would follow Him faithfully. Then they would finally, as never before, enjoy the full extent of the land He had promised their forefathers (cf. Deut. 30). He also promised that they would never lose possession of the land because they would remain faithful to Him (ch. 39). The assurance of the fulfillment of these ancient promises, dating all the way back to Abraham, concludes Ezekiel. It is a fitting climax to this section assuring future blessings for Israel (chs. 33—48) following the return of God's glory to the land (chs. 40—48).<sup>15</sup>

*The Healing Waters and Trees of the Millennial Temple (47.1-12)* – A stream of water will flow from under the south side of the altar toward the east away from the Temple and pass under the outer wall of the Temple complex. The angel led Ezekiel down stream 1000 cubits (v. 3) and the water was up to his ankles. (The 1000 cubits is approximately 1750 feet). The angel then led Ezekiel down stream 1000 more cubits (v. 4) and the water came up to his knees. Another 1000 cubits downstream, the water came up to Ezekiel's waist. In another 1000 cubits (v. 5), the water was too deep and Ezekiel would have had to swim.

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<sup>14</sup> Constable, 212.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 212-3.



This description suggests that some major topographical changes will have occurred east of present-day Jerusalem by this time. Other revelation supports this conclusion (cf. 34:26-30; 36:8-12, 30-36; 37:25-28; 45:1-8; 48:8-14; Joel 3:18; Zech. 13:1; 14:4-8). The water will follow the contours of the altered terrain, not the past or present topography. Zechariah recorded that the water flowing from Jerusalem will divide with half of it going west to the Mediterranean Sea and half east to the Dead Sea (Zech. 14:9). Ezekiel described only the branch that flowed east.<sup>16</sup>

Trees lined both sides of the bank of the river (v. 7) and produce plentiful fruit all year long (v. 12). The leaves of these trees will be used for medicinal purposes (v. 12). The water of the river flows toward what is now the Dead Sea to the east of Jerusalem and “heals” the waters of the Dead Sea so that it has abundant aquatic life (v. 8-9). (The Arabah is the Jordan Valley running south from the Sea of Galilee to the Dead Sea and ultimately into the Gulf of Aquabah).<sup>17</sup> As a matter of fact, the water from the river is like a fountain of youth that heals every living thing that drinks from it (v. 9). Amazingly, the fish that are caught in this giant “lake” or “sea” are of the same variety as the fish of the Mediterranean Sea (v. 10). The people must have salt for seasoning and preserving food, so the swamps and marshes will be turned into salt (v. 11). This formerly desert region would blossom like a rose (cf. 36:35; Isa. 35:1-2, 6-7; Joel 3:18; Rom. 8:19-22).

The literal description offered by Ezekiel defies attempts to spiritualize the passage and make it only symbolic of spiritual blessings from the Lord. Joel had mentioned this river prior to Ezekiel’s day (Joel 3:18) and Zechariah referred to it after Israel returned from Babylonian captivity (Zech 14:8). Zechariah includes additional details – the river will divide with half flowing west toward the Mediterranean (Zech 14:8) and the other half will flow east toward the Dead Sea.

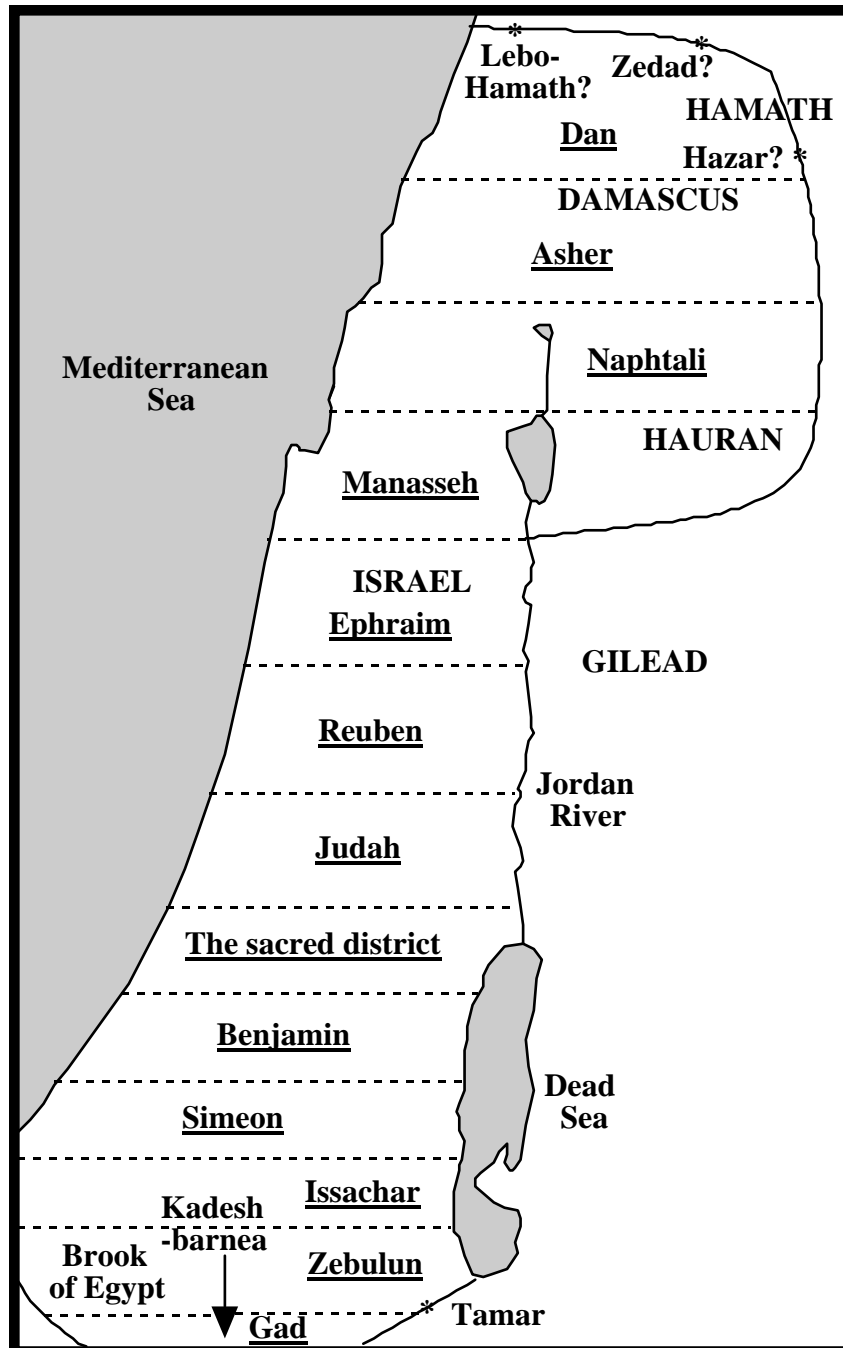
*The Borders of the Land (47.13-23)* - In this passage, Ezekiel is given instructions regarding the borders of Israel in the Millennium.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Constable, 213.

<sup>17</sup> Dyer, “Ezekiel” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, 1313.

<sup>18</sup> The map is taken from Constable, 217.



The boundaries of the restored nation of Israel during the Millennium approach the boundaries of the land as it was under David and Solomon. However, the area east of the Jordan will not be a part of the inheritance in the Millennium. Note that the tribes are not arranged as they were after the Exodus when the land was divided under Joshua (Josh. 13-19). The restoration of the Land during the Millennium will result in something completely new. The central portion of the land around Jerusalem will be set apart for religious and governmental purposes. To the north of the central district are seven tribes – Dan, Asher, Naphtali, Manasseh, Ephraim, Reuben, and Judah. To the south are the remaining five tribes – Benjamin, simeon, Issachar, Zebulun, and Gad.

The northern border will run east from the Mediterranean starting somewhere north of Tyre and Sidon and extending to the east and north so as to encompass a large portion of modern-day Syria. The eastern border will be formed essentially by the Sea of Galilee, the Jordan river, and the Dead Sea.

Please note that there will even be provisions for the “strangers” (Gentiles) who dwell among the Israelites. The “strangers” and their children shall be treated as native-born among the Israelites (v. 22). They will even have an inheritance among the tribes of Israel depending upon the tribe with whom they dwell (v. 23). Even though foreigners were always allowed to live in Israel (cf. Lev 24.22; Num 15.29), in the Millennium they will be allowed to enjoy other privileges previously granted only to Israelites (cf. Isa 56.3-8). Believing Gentiles will truly be blessed during the Millennium by association with believing Israel.

### **Chapter 48**

Chapter 48 focuses upon the division of the land among each of the tribes (vv. 1-29) to include a description of the holy district – Zadokite portion, non-Zadokite portion and the portion belonging to the “Prince” and the city.

Finally, chapter 48 closes with a section of verses that describe the gates of the city (vv. 30-35). There are three gates on each side of the city – north, east, south and west. Each of the gates is named after one of the tribes from the nation of Israel. The name of the city is “The Lord is There.”