

Ezekiel 44-48 • "The LORD is there"

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We are going to finish the book of Ezekiel tonight so buckle up. Let's pray. Father, we thank you and praise you for who you are and we thank you and praise you for giving us your Word. Your Word is life, living and active. Lord, as we consume it, we know that we're taking in life, that which is living and good for us and nourishing to our soul.

We ask you Lord to speak to us through these scriptures tonight. You gave us Lord, the Book of Ezekiel and even though it's challenging sometimes to lay hold of, we believe that there's things to be unlocked and assimilated into our hearts. And we pray that you would do the work tonight of just enlarging our understanding. Fill us Lord with truth, we long for truth. Be with us, we pray Father in Jesus name, amen.

For those of you who remember our last study in Ezekiel, you'll recall that we started chapter 40 last time. And I explained to you that chapter 40 through the end of the book is one continuous vision that was given to the prophet Ezekiel concerning what we call Ezekiel's temple and how things are going to work in the future.

And I say that in the future, but I think I also, I know, I also shared with you last time that there are some very different interpretive approaches to understanding these last 9 chapters of the book of Ezekiel, some of which we've already done. And I also shared with you last time that none of the interpretive approaches are without their own challenges and difficulties. But I believe that Ezekiel is being shown the millennial temple; meaning the temple that will be erected and will stand during the millennial age or what we call the Millennial Kingdom or the Messianic Kingdom. It's that 1,000-year period of time just following the Great Tribulation.

I told you that, you know, one of the problems that we run into by embracing it as a future temple, well, it has to be a future temple. Because none of the temples in the past have met the guidelines of the way this temple is described and laid out, not exactly. So we know that it's never been built before, so it has to be future. But one of the problems with thinking of it as a future temple is something we ran into last week and that is there are animal sacrifices going on. And so the question has really bothered people over the years, why in the world

are there animal sacrifices going on in the millennial temple when in fact Jesus, the perfect sacrifice, has already been made for the sins of mankind and there's no need? And we all know that the sacrifices of animals couldn't take away sins anyway, it couldn't deal with the punishment related to mankind's sins. It simply covered them for a time, but we're told in the New Testament very clearly that the sins of the past were not punished, right?

That's what Jesus came to do, He came to bear the punishment of sins that had been committed before and during and of course, after. Well, I frankly just, I'm not bothered by the existence of the animal sacrifices that are going on in the Millennial Kingdom. First of all, I think that they're going to be happening as a memorial, much like we observe the Lord's table, our communion. And we talk about, you know, the body and blood of Jesus Christ and we do it as a memorial to that work that He did on the cross. And I believe that, that is primarily what it's going to be done during the millennial temple at this time.

But the other thing I want you to remember, Ezekiel's temple and what's going to be happening in Ezekiel's temple is for the Jews. Remember something, the Old Testament is written to the Jews, about the Jews, the church doesn't appear in the Old Testament. These chapters are about Israel and this is about getting back to the way things always should have been during the earlier time of the Old Testament that are now going to be realized during this millennial age.

These things pertain to Israel and her new relationship with her covenant God, all right. So this is an important distinction to draw as we get into these final chapters of Ezekiel. You might say, well, where's the church during this time? Listen, the church is the Bride of Christ, the church has already gone through the wedding supper of the lamb. That's going to, I believe that's going to be happening during the Great Tribulation.

While all that's happening on the earth, we're going to be with the Lord, we're going to be caught up together to be with the Lord. I believe that the marriage supper is going to take place during that time and then we're going to return with Him when He comes. The church is the Bride of Christ and we will be right where a bride ought to be; standing right next to her husband, along with every aspect of what He comes back to do. But the point is, what we're reading here in Ezekiel is not about the bride, it's about Israel.

We Christians can become so self-focused that we go through the Old Testament, we think it's all for us. And to be sure, there's a great deal in the Old Testament that you can lay hold of in terms of wonderful promises related to the character of God and things that are very true. We learn a great deal about what

is true about God, we understand better His righteousness, His holiness, His purity from the Old Testament and we lay hold of these things with great joy and insight. But that doesn't mean that it is written specifically to us as it relates to the things that speak to Israel. These things speak to Israel and you're going to see that it's very Jewish as we go through these final chapters of Ezekiel.

Now remember, we're jumping into the middle of a vision that started back in Ezekiel chapter 40, but we're at chapter 44 now and so we're jumping into this vision. But this is a fairly good jumping point because some things change here. In verse 1 it says, *“Then he brought me back to the outer gate of the sanctuary, which faces east. And it was shut. ² And the Lord said to me, “This gate shall remain shut; it shall not be opened, and no one shall enter by it, for the Lord, the God of Israel, has entered by it. Therefore it shall remain shut.””* (ESV)

Now let me stop you there for a moment and explain what's going on here. And this is again, we're talking about the Millennial Kingdom and God's presence is going to be powerfully present in the temple at that time. But the reason the gate was to be closed and remain closed at this time, was because the Lord Himself had entered the temple and by saying that, this door is not to be open, it is to remain shut, God is saying that His presence will now be permanent with His people in that sense. In other words, it's a picture for you and me related to the permanence of the Lord's presence among His people. God is saying, I'm here, I'm not leaving, the door is shut, you see. These are things that are not going to change as it relates to His presence and His people.

But He goes on to say, now this is interesting, He says, *“³ Only the prince may sit in it...”* And that's the gate, now the door is to remain shut, but the prince, and we'll tell you who the prince is in a moment, or we'll remind you. He says, *“³...the prince may sit in (the gate) it (and he may) to eat bread before the Lord. (that's to have that fellowship meal with the Lord, but it says) He shall enter by way of the vestibule of the gate, and shall go out by the same way.”*

And of course he has to because the gate is shut, he can't actually get in through that gate because once the Lord goes in, the gate is shut. Nobody else goes in and the Lord certainly does not come out. But only the prince is allowed to go into the gate area and to have a fellowship meal with the Lord. Okay, fine, who is the prince? Well, the Lord has already revealed this to Ezekiel and we already talked about it in an earlier study. Let me put it up on the screen, it's from Ezekiel chapter 37, and it says,

Ezekiel 37:25 (ESV)

They shall dwell in the land that I gave to my servant Jacob, where your fathers lived. They and their children and their children's children shall dwell there forever, and David my servant shall be their prince forever.

There are several passages in the Old Testament that tell us that the resurrected David will rule and reign over Israel during the Millennial Kingdom, he will be their prince. The Lord speaks of him here in Ezekiel 37 as, your prince, and this is who we're talking about now in chapter 44. He is going to be able to have this special fellowship meal with the Lord in the gate leading into the temple and the presence of the Lord.

Now, continuing on, verse 4, *“Then he brought me by way of the north gate to the front of the temple, and I looked, and behold, the glory of the Lord filled the temple of the Lord. And I fell on my face. ⁵ And the Lord said to me, “Son of man, mark well, see with your eyes, and hear with your ears all that I shall tell you concerning (and here’s the interesting phrase) all the statutes of the temple of the Lord and all its laws. And mark well the entrance to the temple and all the exits from the sanctuary.””*

That part that I had you kind of take note of there: all the statutes of the temple and all of the laws pertaining to the temple and how it is to run, that's pretty much what we're going to read for the rest of our study here in Ezekiel as we go through these chapters. And the Lord is saying to Ezekiel, now pay attention, mark well, and write these things down, these are the things that you are to remember and to record.

So, He begins though by saying in verse 6, *“And say to the rebellious house, to the house of Israel, Thus says the Lord God: O house of Israel, enough of all your abominations, ⁷ in admitting foreigners, uncircumcised in heart and flesh, to be in my sanctuary, profaning my temple, when you offer to me my food, the fat and the blood. You have broken my covenant, in addition to all your abominations. ⁸ And you have not kept charge of my holy things, but you have set others to keep my charge for you in my sanctuary.”* In other words, the Levites, I told you, were supposed to come in and do this, and you let anybody come in and do this.

He says in verse 9, *“Thus says the Lord God: No foreigner, uncircumcised in heart and flesh, of all the foreigners who are among the people of Israel, shall enter my sanctuary.”* Now this is interesting, I want you to stop here for a moment. So what we're reading here in these few verses, is because of Israel's past unfaithfulness by not keeping to the covenant, and keeping to the

guidelines and the rules related to the covenant related to who could go in the temple precincts, who could minister before the Lord, who could take care of the holy articles and so forth.

Because of the fact that they had been unfaithful to the Lord, and God says right here, you have profaned my temple. He says that in this temple, there would be a proper following of all these guidelines and He says that only those Jews in covenant relationship with the Lord would be allowed into the temple area. So again, this is written specifically to the Jews.

We go on now in verse 10, *“But the Levites who went far from me, going astray from me after their idols when Israel went astray, shall bear their punishment. ¹¹ They shall be ministers in my sanctuary, having oversight at the gates of the temple and ministering in the temple. They shall slaughter the burnt offering and the sacrifice for the people, and they shall stand before the people, to minister to them.*

¹² Because they ministered to them before their idols and became a stumbling block of iniquity to the house of Israel, therefore I have sworn concerning them, declares the Lord God, and they shall bear their punishment.” He doesn't say what it is specifically, but He says here, *“¹³ They shall not come near to me, to serve me as priest, nor come near any of my holy things and the things that are most holy, but they shall bear their shame and the abominations that they have committed. ¹⁴ Yet I will appoint them to keep charge of the temple, to do all its service and all that is to be done in it.”* Now that is essentially what they were given to do under the first covenant.

The Levites were essentially given, they were to keep charge of the temple and they were to do all, to do all the services that God appointed them to do. Apparently though, God had planned to kind of promote them a little bit, almost into that position or that privilege of a high priest, but now He says, that's not going to happen. Why? Because He says, you actually, in addition to taking care of the sacrifices of my people that were prescribed by the law, you actually helped them sacrifice to their pagan idols as well and in so doing, He says, you shall bear their shame.

However, look at verse 15, *“But the Levitical priests, the sons of Zadok, (and this is the branch of priests or Levites, if you will, from the family of Zadok) who kept the charge of my sanctuary when the people of Israel went astray from me, shall come near to me to minister to me. And they shall stand before me to offer me the fat and the blood, declares the Lord God. (alright) ¹⁶ They shall enter my sanctuary, and they shall approach my table, to minister to me, and*

they shall keep my charge.” Why? Because the branch of Zadok the priests remained faithful to the Lord even when Israel became unfaithful. They refused to take part in the sacrifices of pagan idols and they said, we will worship the Lord our God and Him alone, we will not participate in this idolatry.

And so the Lord is rewarding them and so forth. And frankly, this is something that we're going to find repeated through the course of these chapters. This idea that those who exhibited a faithful heart in the days past would experience a closer connection or access, if you will, to God, along with some greater privilege of service. And conversely, those who were unfaithful would be kept at a greater distance in this particular age. Now I want to just remind you once again, this is written to Israel, so the things that you're hearing related to their lives, their past, these are speaking of the past of specific Israelites, alright.

Verse 17, *“When they enter the gates of the inner court, they shall wear linen garments. They shall have nothing of wool on them, while they minister at the gates of the inner court, and within. (He explains why) ¹⁸ They shall have linen turbans on their heads, and linen undergarments around their waists. They shall not bind themselves with anything that causes sweat. ¹⁹ And when they go out into the outer court to the people, they shall put off the garments in which they have been ministering and lay them in the holy chambers. And they shall put on other garments, lest they transmit holiness to the people with their garments. ²⁰ They shall not shave their heads or let their locks grow long; they shall surely trim the hair of their heads. ²¹ No priest shall drink wine when he enters the inner court.*

²² *They shall not marry a widow or a divorced woman, but only virgins of the offspring of the house of Israel, or a widow who is the widow of a priest. ²³ They shall teach my people the difference between the holy and the common, and show them how to distinguish between the unclean and the clean. ²⁴ In a dispute, they shall act as judges, and they shall judge it according to my judgments. They shall keep my laws and my statutes in all my appointed feasts, and they shall keep my Sabbaths holy. ²⁵ They shall not defile themselves by going near to a dead person. However, for father or mother, for son or daughter, for brother or unmarried sister they may defile themselves.”* And, you know, this is much the way it was during the old covenant for the priests. Oh, and by the way, don't get confused about these references to people dying during the millennial age, because remember, people are going to enter into the millennial age in mortal bodies. We're talking about the Jews and we're talking about any Gentiles that survived the Great Tribulation. And people will survive the Great Tribulation, not everyone will perish, right? But these are people who entered into the period of the Great Tribulation because they were essentially

unbelievers and so there will be people living during the millennial age who will live and who will die a physical death and then be resurrected later on. So you need to understand that.

But again, I have to remind you, these references to people living and dying don't relate to the church because you know that when Jesus comes for us, Paul says, we will be changed in the twinkling of an eye. We will receive at that time, what he calls, our incorruptible bodies and so we will already have our resurrection bodies while we're with the Lord in His presence. That's the only way we could stand to be with the Lord in His presence, is with resurrected bodies.

These bodies couldn't stand to be in the presence of the Lord, they would just, they'd burn up. But we'll have new bodies so when we return with Him, we will have those new resurrected incorruptible bodies. So these references to death during the Millennial Kingdom will not apply to the Bride of Christ, okay? Now I will tell you that even though people will die during the millennium, we know that they will not die young. People's lifespans will be greatly expanded, greatly lengthened during the millennial age.

Verse 26, *“After he has become clean, they shall count seven days for him. ²⁷ And on the day that he goes into the Holy Place, into the inner court, to minister in the Holy Place, he shall offer his sin offering, declares the Lord God. ²⁸ “This shall be their inheritance: I am their inheritance: and you shall give them no possession in Israel; I am their possession. ²⁹ They shall eat the grain offering, the sin offering, and the guilt offering, and every devoted thing in Israel shall be theirs. ³⁰ And the first of all the firstfruits of all kinds, and every offering of all kinds from all your offerings, shall belong to the priests. You shall also give to the priests the first of your dough, that a blessing may rest on your house. ³¹ The priests shall not eat of anything, whether bird or beast, that has died of itself or is torn by wild animals.”* All right, so you can see some of the restrictions that are given for those who minister before the Lord.

Chapter 45, we continue on. Now we deal with land allotments. *“When you allot the land as an inheritance, you shall set apart for the Lord a portion of the land as a holy district, 25,000 cubits long and 20,000 cubits broad. It shall be holy throughout its whole extent.”*

Now, I'll stop you here just for a moment, because this is very interesting. It was always God's intention, when He brought his people into the promised land, that it would be a place where the creator God could live among His people. And

here, in this vision that God is giving Ezekiel of the future, we're going to find that God's presence becomes the new focus of Israel's religious life. And it begins with this allotment of land that is going to be given over to the Lord, which He refers to here as this Holy District. And it is approximately 8, little over 8 miles long and about 6 and 1/2 miles wide, this area that is holy to the Lord. And what it means by that is that, none of the tribes of Israel are going to live within that particular area, that's given over to the Lord himself.

And then verse 2, and then He says, *“Of this (and now this is of this holy district) a square plot of 500 by 500 cubits shall be for the sanctuary, with fifty cubits for an open space around it. ³ And from this measured district you shall measure off a section 25,000 cubits long and 10,000 broad, in which shall be the sanctuary, the Most Holy Place. ⁴ It shall be the holy portion of the land. It shall be for the priests, who minister in the sanctuary and approach the Lord to minister to him, and it shall be a place for their houses and a holy place for the sanctuary. ⁵ Another section, 25,000 cubits long and 10,000 cubits broad, shall be for the Levites who minister at the temple, as their possession for cities to live in.”* So these are special areas just for the Levites to live in as they minister.

Verse 6, *“Alongside the portion set apart as the holy district you shall assign for the property of the city an area 5,000 cubits broad and 25,000 cubits long. It shall belong to the whole house of Israel. ⁷ And (verse 7) to the prince (now we know this is David) shall belong the land on both sides of the holy district and the property of the city, alongside the holy district and the property of the city, on the west and on the east, corresponding in length to one of the tribal portions, and extending from the western to the eastern boundary ⁸ of the land. It is to be his property in Israel. And my princes shall no more oppress my people, but they shall let the house of Israel have the land according to their tribes.”*

You'll remember that there were instances, unfortunate instances, that we read about in the Old Testament where some of the kings became very corrupt and stole the land from the people that had been given them as an inheritance from the Lord. But notice God says here, that's not going to happen anymore. During the messianic age, the prince, and..., will never take advantage of the people or oppress the people again in that way.

Verse 9, *“Thus says the Lord God: Enough, O princes of Israel! (and this kind of seems to be more of a present-day exhortation, but we'll just keep reading it) Put away violence and oppression, and execute justice and righteousness. Cease your evictions of my people, declares the Lord God. ¹⁰ “You shall have just balances, a just ephah, and a just bath.””* These are measurements and

weights that they would use for the purpose of buying and selling and sometimes they would change things in such a way that the figures would be in their favor. And so the Lord is calling them to a place of executing just balances and weights.

Verse 11, *“The ephah and the bath shall be of the same measure, the bath containing one tenth of a homer, and the ephah one tenth of a homer; the homer shall be the standard measure. ¹² The shekel shall be twenty gerahs; twenty shekels plus twenty-five shekels plus fifteen shekels shall be your mina. ¹³ “This is the offering that you shall make: one sixth of an ephah from each homer of wheat, and one sixth of an ephah from each homer of barley, ¹⁴ and as the fixed portion of oil, measured in baths, one tenth of a bath from each cor (the cor, like the homer, contains ten baths).*

¹⁵ *And one sheep from every flock of two hundred, from the watering places of Israel for grain offering, burnt offering, and peace offerings, to make atonement for them, declares the Lord God. ¹⁶ All the people of the land shall be obliged to give this offering to the prince in Israel. ¹⁷ It shall be the prince's duty to furnish the burnt offerings, grain offerings, and drink offerings, at the feasts, the new moons, and the Sabbaths, all the appointed feasts of the house of Israel: he shall provide the sin offerings, grain offerings, burnt offerings, and peace offerings, to make atonement on behalf of the house of Israel.*

¹⁸ *“Thus says the Lord God: In the first month, on the first day of the month, you shall take a bull from the herd without blemish, and purify the sanctuary. ¹⁹ The priest shall take some of the blood of the sin offering and put it on the doorposts of the temple, the four corners of the ledge of the altar, and the posts of the gate of the inner court. ²⁰ You shall do the same on the seventh day of the month for anyone who has sinned through error or ignorance; so you shall make atonement for the temple.*

²¹ *“In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month, you shall celebrate the Feast of the Passover, and for seven days unleavened bread shall be eaten. ²² On that day the prince shall provide for himself and all the people of the land a young bull for a sin offering. (boy, that's a lot of young bulls) ²³ And on the seven days of the festival he shall provide as a burnt offering to the Lord seven young bulls and seven rams without blemish, on each of the seven days; and a male goat daily for a sin offering. ²⁴ And he shall provide as a grain offering an ephah for each bull, an ephah for each ram, and a hin of oil to each ephah. ²⁵ In the seventh month, on the fifteenth day of the month and for the seven days of the feast, he shall make the same provision for sin offerings, burnt offerings, and grain offerings, and for the oil.”*

This is interesting stuff, isn't it? Kind of sounds like, you know, we're not reading about a future time, it kind of sounds, well, it doesn't kind of sound, it sounds very similar to what we read about is the instructions that God gave through Moses. There are things missing, we talked about that before. There are things missing from the Mosaic Covenant but there's a lot of similarities here. And you might kind of ask yourself, why would God put the nation of Israel during the Millennial Kingdom through all of this? Why would He do this? I don't know.

It just seems to me like it's necessary because the nation of Israel existed for so many years doing these sacrifices, offering all of these things, doing all these regulations and not understanding why. Not understanding the holiness of God, not understanding how it pointed to the perfect and final sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross. And they went through all this stuff and then, as we know, they stopped doing it, they're fundamentally not doing it today and so all this has ceased.

And now, really, the next thing that's going to happen historically, is the Jews are going to think they've found the Messiah, when in fact they have not. They will be thrust into the Great Tribulation, they'll think that everything is hunky dory for a while and then, of course, you know, everything will turn on them. And then what's going to happen at the end of the Tribulation Period? Jesus is going to return; their Messiah is going to come and rescue them from certain destruction from the nations of the world and suddenly, here's Jesus.

Well now wait a minute, we did all that stuff in the Old Testament, all those sacrifices, all those regulations, all those rules, and now we just forget about it? We just stopped thinking about it, we stopped dealing with it? I don't know, it seems just appropriate to me that God is going to start, at least start off the Millennial Kingdom, putting them through all of these rigors once again so that they can fully understand and appreciate what Jesus came to fulfill, and how His sacrifice on the cross was that perfect once for all Passover lamb.

But what a perfect way to drive home that point, than by taking the nation of Israel during that time, in that early part of the millennium, and I don't know how long this is going to last. It might last for a period of time and then God says, now, have you figured it out what we're doing? And then it'll stop, I don't know. But the point is, there's a point, God has a point to all this. To communicate to His people what He had been saying from the very beginning.

Chapter 46, *“Thus says the Lord God: The gate of the inner court that faces east shall be shut on the six working days, but on the Sabbath day it shall be*

opened, and on the day of the new moon it shall be opened. ² The prince shall enter by the vestibule of the gate from outside, and shall take his stand by the post of the gate. The priests shall offer his burnt offering and his peace offerings, and he shall worship at the threshold of the gate. Then he shall go out, but the gate shall not be shut until evening. ³ The people of the land shall bow down at the entrance of that gate before the Lord on the Sabbaths and on the new moons.

⁴ The burnt offering that the prince offers to the Lord on the Sabbath day shall be six lambs without blemish and a ram without blemish. ⁵ And the grain offering with the ram shall be an ephah, and the grain offering with the lambs shall be as much as he is able, together with a hin of oil to each ephah. ⁶ On the day of the new moon he shall offer a bull from the herd without blemish, and six lambs and a ram, which shall be without blemish. ⁷ As a grain offering he shall provide an ephah with the bull and an ephah with the ram, and with the lambs as much as he is able, together with a hin of oil to each ephah. ⁸ When the prince enters, he shall enter by the vestibule of the gate, and he shall go out by the same way.

⁹ “When the people of the land come before the Lord at the appointed feasts, he who enters by the north gate to worship shall go out by the south gate, and he who enters by the south gate shall go out by the north gate: no one shall return by way of the gate by which he entered, but each shall go out straight ahead.” Those of you who like order, you probably just love this passage right here, don't you? Isn't it good to know, with probably what is going to be hundreds of thousands of people moving through that temple area at the time, there's going to be an established flow of traffic. I like that, I mean, our God is a God of order, right? You don't think of this thing in your mind as chaotic, you know and people coming and going, oops, sorry, there's going to be an enter and an exit lane. I like that, our God is a God of order.

Verse 10, “When they enter, the prince shall enter with them, and when they go out, he shall go out. ¹¹ “At the feasts and the appointed festivals, the grain offering with a young bull shall be an ephah, and with a ram an ephah, and with the lambs as much as one is able to give, together with a hin of oil to an ephah. ¹² When the prince provides a freewill offering, either a burnt offering or peace offerings as a freewill offering to the Lord, the gate facing east shall be opened for him. And he shall offer his burnt offering or his peace offerings as he does on the Sabbath day. Then he shall go out, and after he has gone out the gate shall be shut.

¹³ “You shall provide a lamb a year old without blemish for a burnt offering to the Lord daily; morning by morning you shall provide it. ¹⁴ And you shall provide a grain offering with it morning by morning, one sixth of an ephah, and one third of a hin of oil to moisten the flour, as a grain offering to the Lord. This is a perpetual statute. ¹⁵ Thus the lamb and the meal offering and the oil shall be provided, morning by morning, for a regular burnt offering.

¹⁶ “Thus says the Lord God: If the prince makes a gift to any of his sons as his inheritance, it shall belong to his sons. It is their property by inheritance. ¹⁷ But if he makes a gift out of his inheritance to one of his servants, it shall be his to the year of liberty. Then it shall revert to the prince; surely it is his inheritance—it shall belong to his sons. ¹⁸ The prince shall not take any of the inheritance of the people, thrusting them out of their property. He shall give his sons their inheritance out of his own property, so that none of my people shall be scattered from his property.” Once again, this was something that often got out of control with the kings of Israel.

¹⁹ “Then he brought me through the entrance, which was at the side of the gate, to the north row of the holy chambers for the priests, and behold, a place was there at the extreme western end of them. ²⁰ And he said to me, “This is the place where the priests shall boil the guilt offering and the sin offering, and where they shall bake the grain offering, in order not to bring them out into the outer court and so transmit holiness to the people.”” Again, that’s reserved just for the priest.

²¹ “Then he brought me out to the outer court and led me around to the four corners of the court. And behold, in each corner of the court there was another court— ²² in the four corners of the court were small courts, forty cubits long and thirty broad; the four were of the same size. ²³ On the inside, around each of the four courts was a row of masonry, with hearths made at the bottom of the rows all around. ²⁴ Then he said to me, “These are the kitchens where those who minister at the temple shall boil the sacrifices of the people.”” Meaning, obviously the sacrifices that the people brought to offer to the Lord.

Chapter 47. “Then he brought me back to the door of the temple, and behold, water was issuing from below the threshold of the temple toward the east (for the temple faced east). The water was flowing down from below the south end of the threshold of the temple, south of the altar. ² Then he brought me out by way of the north gate and led me around on the outside to the outer gate that faces toward the east; and behold, the water was trickling out on the south side.”

Now this is very interesting and we're going to talk a little bit more here as we go through this chapter about this water and what it means. But what's interesting about this prophecy in Ezekiel, seeing this water issuing from the threshold of the temple is that he's not the only prophet who sees this particular thing. We actually read about it in different books, I'll share a couple of them with you. First from Joel on the screen, chapter 3, look at this.

Joel 3:18 (ESV)

And in that day the mountains shall drip sweet wine, and the hills shall flow with milk, and all the streambeds of Judah shall flow with water; and a fountain shall come forth from the house of the LORD...

And then look with me at Zechariah chapter 14.

Zechariah 14:8-9 (ESV)

On that day living waters shall flow out from Jerusalem, half of them to the eastern sea and half of them to the western sea. It shall continue in summer as in winter. And the LORD will be king over all the earth. On that day the LORD will be one and his name one.

So various prophets saw this same dynamic of this water issuing forth from the temple and much will be the same in the new Jerusalem that we read about in the Book of Revelation as well. The living waters will issue forth from the presence of God, literally watering the earth at that time as well.

Verse 3, “Going on eastward with a measuring line in his hand, the man measured a thousand cubits, and then led me through the water, and it was ankle-deep. ⁴ Again he measured a thousand, (that means cubits) and led me through the water, and it was knee-deep. Again he measured a thousand, and led me through the water, and it was waist-deep. ⁵ Again he measured a thousand, and it was a river that I could not pass through, for the water had risen. It was deep enough to swim in, a river that could not be passed through.” Interesting from this trickle, isn't it, that begins under the threshold of the temple that it becomes this flowing river that Ezekiel says, I could no longer even stand in the midst of because it was way too deep and it was rushing and so forth and it's just it's kind of interesting. It almost kind of boggles the mind, you know, to kind of even imagine this sort of a thing. Well, you know, as you might guess, Bible commentators over the years and students of the Word of God have wondered, you know, what this means? What is the illustration? What is the picture that we're seeing here of this gradually increasing depth of water that comes out from the temple?

And you have to know that many interpretations have been advanced over the years. I'm not going to share any of them with you because, frankly, they're all rather fanciful and any one of them, I suppose, could be true, but they could all also be just as equally false. Because, essentially, what people are doing is, they're guessing.

And whenever we take the Word of God and we spiritualize it without any kind of understanding from whether or not the passage even should be spiritualized. We always are going to come up with just our best guess. And our best guesses really aren't worth a great deal, they're just guesses. And so, that's just kind of the way it is.

I don't feel particularly qualified to offer any kind of a spiritual interpretation. If anything, it shows the power, you know, of this little trickle that turns into a mighty raging river during the millennial age and it's going to be pretty incredible to see. And I think we'll just have to kind of leave it there.

But He goes on in verse 6 to say, *“And he said to me, “Son of man, have you seen this? Then he led me back to the bank of the river. ⁷ As I went back, I saw on the bank of the river very many trees on the one side and on the other. ⁸ And he said to me, “This water flows toward the eastern region and goes down into the Arabah, and enters the sea; when the water flows into the sea, the water will become fresh. ⁹ And wherever the river goes, every living creature that swarms will live, and there will be very many fish. For this water goes there, that the waters of the sea may become fresh; so everything will live where the river goes. (now, this is interesting)*

¹⁰ Fishermen will stand beside the sea. ...” Now this is good news for some of you guys, they're still going to be fishermen in the millennial age, so don't throw away your pole quite yet. In the millennium, apparently fishermen are going to be, at least they're called fishermen, we assume they still do that.

“¹⁰ ...From Engedi to Eneglaim it will be a place for the spreading of nets. Its fish will be of very many kinds, like the fish of the Great Sea. ¹¹ But its swamps and marshes will not become fresh; they are to be left for salt. ¹² And on the banks, on both sides of the river, there will grow all kinds of trees for food. Their leaves will not wither, nor their fruit fail, but they will bear fresh fruit every month, because the water for them flows from the sanctuary. Their fruit will be for food, and their leaves for healing.” So you can see that there are obviously very special properties to this living water that flows from the temple of the Lord, causing the waters of the great sea to become fresh, all these fish.

So what we pick up so far here is that we're going to be eating lots of fish and fruit here in the Millennial Kingdom so I hope that is something you like. Not that you're going to have to eat at that time because you'll have your new resurrection body, but we know that Jesus ate some fish with His resurrection body and so apparently, we'll still be doing some of that.

Now, the next emphasis that Ezekiel's vision is going to kind of take here in verse 13 is announced in this very verse. *“Thus says the Lord God: “This is the boundary by which you shall divide the land for inheritance among the twelve tribes of Israel. Joseph shall have two portions.”* Isn't this great? Even the Millennial Kingdom, God's still going to give Joseph 2 portions. You know, way back, you know, in the Book of Genesis, we learned that God gave Joseph a double portion and that means that instead of having a tribe named after Joseph, there were 2 tribes named after his 2 sons. And so it continues on in the Millennial Kingdom that Joseph is given a double portion.

And He says in verse 14, *“And you shall divide equally what I swore to give to your fathers. This land shall fall to you as your inheritance.”*¹⁵ *“This shall be the boundary of the land: (Now these are probably not going to mean a whole lot to you because some of these have changed names and so forth. But He says,) On the north side, from the Great Sea by way of Hethlon to Lebo-hamath, and on to Zedad,*¹⁶ *Berothah, Sibraim (which lies on the border between Damascus and Hamath), as far as Hazer-hatticon, which is on the border of Hauran.*¹⁷ *So the boundary shall run from the sea to Hazer-enan, which is on the northern border of Damascus, with the border of Hamath to the north. This shall be the north side.*

¹⁸ *“On the east side, the boundary shall run between Hauran and Damascus; along the Jordan between Gilead and the land of Israel; to the eastern sea and as far as Tamar. This shall be the east side.”*¹⁹ *“On the south side, it shall run from Tamar as far as the waters of Meribah-kadesh, from there along the Brook of Egypt to the Great Sea. This shall be the south side.*

²⁰ *“On the west side, the Great Sea shall be the boundary to a point opposite Lebo-hamath. This shall be the west side.”*²¹ *“So you shall divide this land among you according to the tribes of Israel.”*²² *You shall allot it as an inheritance for yourselves and for the sojourners who reside among you and have had children among you. They shall be to you as native-born children of Israel. With you they shall be allotted an inheritance among the tribes of Israel.”*²³ *In whatever tribe the sojourner resides, there you shall assign him his inheritance, declares the Lord God.”* And again, we're talking about things that

pertain to Israel here, not to the church. God is finally going to give them peace in their final allotments of the land.

Now, the final chapter of Ezekiel is going to give us these allotment borders, and again, some of these names are not going to mean a whole lot, but we're going to go through these. And by the way, you're going to find out that all 12 tribes of Israel are here, isn't that interesting? There aren't any lost 10 tribes. During the Millennial Kingdom, they're all there, God doesn't lose anything.

Verse 1, *“These are the names of the tribes: Beginning at the northern extreme, beside the way of Hethlon to Lebo-hamath, as far as Hazar-enan (which is on the northern border of Damascus over against Hamath), and extending from the east side to the west, Dan, one portion. ² Adjoining the territory of Dan, from the east side to the west, Asher, one portion. ³ Adjoining the territory of Asher, from the east side to the west, Naphtali, one portion. ⁴ Adjoining the territory of Naphtali, from the east side to the west, Manasseh, one portion. ⁵ Adjoining the territory of Manasseh, from the east side to the west, Ephraim, one portion. ⁶ Adjoining the territory of Ephraim, from the east side to the west, Reuben, one portion. ⁷ Adjoining the territory of Reuben, from the east side to the west, Judah, one portion.*

⁸ *“Adjoining the territory of Judah, from the east side to the west, shall be the portion which you shall set apart, 25,000 cubits in breadth, and in length equal to one of the tribal portions, from the east side to the west, with the sanctuary in the midst of it.”* So you can hear that we have the first tribes of Israel who are given their portions of land in the northern most region of Israel during the Millennial Kingdom and then we're going to continue.

Verses 9 and following are going to continue with repeating the allotment for the Holy District. *“The portion that you shall set apart for the Lord (once again) shall be 25,000 cubits in length, and 20,000 in breadth. ¹⁰ These shall be the allotments of the holy portion: the priests shall have an allotment measuring 25,000 cubits on the northern side, 10,000 cubits in breadth on the western side, 10,000 in breadth on the eastern side, and 25,000 in length on the southern side, with the sanctuary of the Lord in the midst of it. ¹¹ This shall be for the consecrated priests, the sons of Zadok, who kept my charge, who did not go astray when the people of Israel went astray, as the Levites did.*

¹² *And it shall belong to them as a special portion from the holy portion of the land, a most holy place, adjoining the territory of the Levites. ¹³ And alongside the territory of the priests, the Levites shall have an allotment 25,000 cubits in length and 10,000 in breadth. The whole length shall be 25,000 cubits and the*

breadth 20,000. ¹⁴ They shall not sell or exchange any of it. They shall not alienate this choice portion of the land, for it is holy to the Lord.

¹⁵ “The remainder, 5,000 cubits in breadth and 25,000 in length, shall be for common use for the city, for dwellings and for open country. In the midst of it shall be the city, ¹⁶ and these shall be its measurements: the north side 4,500 cubits, the south side 4,500, the east side 4,500, and the west side 4,500. ¹⁷ And the city shall have open land: on the north 250 cubits, on the south 250, on the east 250, and on the west 250. ¹⁸ The remainder of the length alongside the holy portion shall be 10,000 cubits to the east, and 10,000 to the west, and it shall be alongside the holy portion. Its produce shall be food for the workers of the city. ¹⁹ And the workers of the city, from all the tribes of Israel, shall till it. ²⁰ The whole portion that you shall set apart shall be 25,000 cubits square, that is, the holy portion together with the property of the city.

²¹ “What remains on both sides of the holy portion and of the property of the city shall belong to the prince. (that’s David) Extending from the 25,000 cubits of the holy portion to the east border, and westward from the 25,000 cubits to the west border, parallel to the tribal portions, it shall belong to the prince. The holy portion with the sanctuary of the temple shall be in its midst. ²² It shall be separate from the property of the Levites and the property of the city, which are in the midst of that which belongs to the prince. The portion of the prince shall lie between the territory of Judah and the territory of Benjamin.” That’s fascinating.

All right, now we come to the remaining tribes. Verse 23, “As for the rest of the tribes: from the east side to the west, Benjamin, one portion. ²⁴ Adjoining the territory of Benjamin, from the east side to the west, Simeon, one portion. ²⁵ Adjoining the territory of Simeon, from the east side to the west, Issachar, one portion. ²⁶ Adjoining the territory of Issachar, from the east side to the west, Zebulun, one portion. ²⁷ Adjoining the territory of Zebulun, from the east side to the west, Gad, one portion. ²⁸ And adjoining the territory of Gad to the south, the boundary shall run from Tamar to the waters of Meribah-kadesh, from there along the Brook of Egypt to the Great Sea. ²⁹ This is the land that you shall allot as an inheritance among the tribes of Israel, and these are their portions, declares the Lord God.”

Now, these last verses are interesting in that they reveal to us here that the city of Jerusalem during the Messianic Kingdom will have memorial gates for all of the 12 tribes of Israel. Verse 30 says, “These shall be the exits of the city: On the north side, which is to be 4,500 cubits by measure, ³¹ three gates, the gate of Reuben, the gate of Judah, and the gate of Levi, the gates of the city being

named after the tribes of Israel. ³² *On the east side, which is to be 4,500 cubits, three gates, the gate of Joseph, the gate of Benjamin, and the gate of Dan.”*

Verse 33, *“On the south side, which is to be 4,500 cubits by measure, three gates, the gate of Simeon, the gate of Issachar, and the gate of Zebulun.* ³⁴ *On the west side, which is to be 4,500 cubits, three gates, the gate of Gad, the gate of Asher, and the gate of Naphtali.* ³⁵ *The circumference of the city shall be 18,000 cubits. ...”* Or just under 6 miles or if you do kilometers, about 9.6 kilometers if that makes more sense to you.

And this book ends with this statement and this is one of reasons we know we’re talking about the Millennial Kingdom, the Millennial Temple, the Millennial City. ³⁵ *...And the name of the city from that time on shall be, The Lord Is There.”* So the city gets a name change, The Lord is There. Isn't that wonderful? And that's where we end our study of Ezekiel. Fascinating study, incredible insights that were given here prophetically into this time that is to come.

Before we close in prayer, I need to let you know that we're not going to be having a service next Wednesday in here, but the kids will be having Awana over in the other building. But this room is going to be undergoing kind of some maintenance and some stuff that we need to have the room for during the week.

So again, we will not do a study in here next Wednesday, but Awana will be going on. So, the junior high kids, they're being told in their class tonight, instead of gathering with us like they normally do for worship, they're going to go right over to their building. But that's going to be appropriate because they're actually doing their Christmas party next Wednesday, so, that'll work out good for them.

So, just keep that in mind for next week and then we will be starting Daniel, the Book of Daniel. And just to tell you how weird it is this time around. The last time we did Daniel, I was already so far through the New Testament that we were doing the Book of Revelation at the same time, isn't that crazy? Yeah, we were doing Daniel and Revelation at the same time but I've gotten so much slower in my New Testament study. And one of the things that really put us behind, as you recall, it took me 2 and a half years to get through Matthew and that's where we slowed way down in the New Testament. And so now we're kind of, you know, off, if you will, but anyway.

And I remember last time we went through Daniel and Revelation at the same time, there were such incredible insights that we gained from doing those same

2 studies simultaneously. And unfortunately, we will not have those to kind of rely on. However, when we go through Daniel, you are certainly free to go through our study in the Book of Revelation on our website, because it's still there. And there are still those very incredible correlations between those 2 books. So, kids are going to be done in about 5 minutes, let's pray.

Father, we thank you so much for giving us the Book of Ezekiel and once again, Father, as challenging and as difficult as some portions of this book are, we know that this is from you. We know that this is inspired Word of God and we know that whatever is unknown to us today will be made very clear in the days to come. And we thank you, Father God for the revelation that you've given to men like Ezekiel, who were faithful to pass along the Word of the Lord and to convey the things that he did about the days that are to come.

We thank you, Father, for knowing that you are sovereignly working your will and your purpose even in the midst of a world that seems to be completely out of control. We thank you Father for the work that you're doing in our hearts as well to bring us into a closer relationship with you and to continue to fill us with grace and understanding through your Word.

Lord, allow this word to just so permeate our hearts that we grow in the grace from it. We thank you Father for this time and we commit our hearts to you in Jesus name, amen, amen. God bless you.