

Ezekiel

Book Study

Chapters 47-48

Chapters 47-48 : NKJV with notes

47 Then he brought me back to the door of the temple; and there was water, flowing from under the threshold of the temple toward the east, for the front of the temple faced east; the water was flowing from under the right side of the temple, south of the altar. ² He brought me out by way of the north gate, and led me around on the outside to the outer gateway that faces east; and there was water, running out on the right side.

- Led back to the door of the temple (presumably by the radiant man of Ezekiel 40:3), Ezekiel saw something that never existed in the temple before: a river flowing directly from the temple. (Enduring Word Commentary)
- "Ezekiel uses this imagery to affirm that the new temple, like the old, will be a font of blessing for Israel." (Vawter and Hoppe)
- Significantly, the river does not come from a king's palace or a government building. It doesn't come from a marketplace, a place of business, or an athletic arena. It comes from God's house. (Enduring Word Commentary)

³ And when the man went out to the east with the line in his hand, he measured one thousand cubits, and he brought me through the waters; the water *came up to my ankles*. ⁴ Again he measured one thousand and brought me through the waters; the water *came up to my knees*. Again he measured one thousand and brought me through; the water *came up to my waist*.

- Together with the unnamed guide, Ezekiel went into and through the waters. The river was not something for Ezekiel to simply look at or think about; it was something for him to enter into. (Enduring Word Commentary)
- Fundamentally, this shows us the miraculous nature of a real river in a real Messianic kingdom to come. Yet by spiritual analogy, there is a powerful picture of increasing progress and depth in our spiritual life. It illustrates a progression from ankles, to knees, to waist, to depths where one can no longer touch the ground and must swim. God's people read this and feel a call to go deeper. They shouldn't stop until they are swimming, carried along by God's currents and comfortable in that place. (Enduring Word commentary)
- Many commentators and preachers through the centuries have seen the increasing depth of this river to be an illustration of the great depths of God's word. "Scriptures have their

shallows wherein the lamb may wade, like as they have their profundities wherein the elephant himself may swim..." (Trapp)

⁵ Again he measured one thousand, *and it was* a river that I could not cross; for the water was too deep, water in which one must swim, a river that could not be crossed.

- This rapid increase in depth – from a small trickle of a stream to ankle depth, to knee depth, to waist depth, all in the course of about a mile (or 1.5 kilometers) – is miraculous. We read nothing of other streams leading into this; it is a miraculous and abundant provision. (Enduring Word Commentary)

⁶ He said to me, "Son of man, have you seen *this?*" Then he brought me and returned me to the bank of the river.

- In all of its recorded history, Jerusalem never had such a river. There were streams and springs, but never a rich, mighty river, and never one flowing from this part of the city. In the semi-arid geography of Israel a river like this was both a blessing and a miracle. It brought life, growth, vitality, refreshment, hope, and security. (Enduring Word Commentary)
- "Blessing, fertility and water are almost interchangeable ideas in the Old Testament" (Taylor). We think of the beauty of Psalm 46:4: "*There is a river whose streams shall make glad the city of God.*"
- Though such a river has symbolic meaning, we should not miss the plain promises of such a river in the coming kingdom of the Messiah.
"*A fountain shall flow from the house of the LORD (Joel 3:18).*
"*And in that day it shall be – that living waters shall flow from Jerusalem (Zechariah 14:8).*
- John mentioned a similar river relevant to the eternal state in Revelation, but it isn't the same as this river. "The variance between Ezekiel's account of this river and that of John in the Revelation centers on the river's source. God is the source of both rivers; but Ezekiel saw the river issuing from the temple, whereas John saw the river coming from the throne of God and of the Lamb (a temple not existing according to Revelation 21:22)." (Alexander)
- "Jerusalem is the only great city of the ancient world that wasn't located on a river, and in the east, a dependable water supply is essential for life and for defense. During the Kingdom Age, Jerusalem shall have a river such as no other nation ever had." (Wiersbe)

⁷ When I returned, there, along the bank of the river, *were* very many trees on one side and the other. ⁸ Then he said to me: "This water flows toward the eastern region, goes down into the valley, and enters the sea. *When it reaches the sea, its waters are healed.*

- This miraculous river that will flow from the temple of God, flows eastward away from the Mediterranean Sea and towards the Arabah rift of the Jordan River and Dead Sea. This is the "sea" the waters of the river will enter. Currently, it is a dead and salty sea with the highest

concentration of minerals. But in this Millennial Age, God's water will heal the sea and bring life to the Dead Sea and bring healing to the environment.

- How can the river flow eastward when there are mountains in the way east of Jerusalem? It is prophesied when Jesus comes he will split the Mount of Olives east to west, moving half of the mountain north and half of the mountain south. This would create a natural valley for the new river to flow eastward.

Zechariah 14:4-9

Acts 1:9-12

⁹ And it shall be *that* every living thing that moves, wherever the rivers go, will live. There will be a very great multitude of fish, because these waters go there; for they will be healed, and everything will live wherever the river goes. ¹⁰ It shall be *that* fishermen will stand by it from En Gedi to En Eglaim; they will be *places* for spreading their nets. Their fish will be of the same kinds as the fish of the Great Sea, exceedingly many.

¹¹ But its swamps and marshes will not be healed; they will be given over to salt.

- "The preservation of some pockets of saltiness is intentional, recognizing the economic benefit of the minerals found in and around the Dead Sea. Salt (melah) is not only a valuable seasoning and preserving agent; the word functions generically for a wide range of chemicals extracted from the sea." (Block)

¹² Along the bank of the river, on this side and that, will grow all *kinds of* trees used for food; their leaves will not wither, and their fruit will not fail. They will bear fruit every month, because their water flows from the sanctuary. Their fruit will be for food, and their leaves for medicine."

Borders of the Land

¹³ Thus says the Lord God: "These *are* the borders by which you shall divide the land as an inheritance among the twelve tribes of Israel. Joseph *shall have two* portions.

- "The boundaries are substantially those originally given to Moses in Numbers 34:1-15. In Numbers the southern boundary is given first; here the reckoning is from the north." (Feinberg)
- "*Joseph shall have two portions*" -As was with the division of the land under Joshua, the two sons of Joseph (Ephraim and Manasseh) would each have their portion. (Enduring Word Commentary)

¹⁴ You shall inherit it equally with one another; for I raised My hand in an oath to give it to your fathers, and this land shall fall to you as your inheritance.

¹⁵ "This *shall be* the border of the land on the north: from the Great Sea, *by* the road to Hethlon, as one goes to Zedad, ¹⁶ Hamath, Berothah, Sibraim (which *is* between the border of Damascus and the border of Hamath), to Hazar Hatticon (which *is* on the border of Hauran). ¹⁷ Thus the boundary shall be from the Sea to Hazar Enan, the

border of Damascus; and as for the north, northward, it is the border of Hamath. *This is the north side.*

18 “On the east side you shall mark out the border from between Hauran and Damascus, and between Gilead and the land of Israel, along the Jordan, and along the eastern side of the sea. *This is the east side.*

19 “The south side, toward the South, *shall be* from Tamar to the waters of Meribah by Kadesh, along the brook to the Great Sea. *This is the south side, toward the South.*

20 “The west side *shall be* the Great Sea, from the *southern* boundary until one comes to a point opposite Hamath. *This is the west side.*

- If these borders were put upon a modern map it would include all of Lebanon and a good portion of Syria (including Damascus). It would *not* include modern Jordan or Egypt, and *not* extend southward to modern Eilat. Only twice in Israel’s history did the political borders of Israel extend as far north as Lebo-hamath: under David and under Jeroboam II ([2 Kings 14:25](#))." (Block)

21 “Thus you shall divide this land among yourselves according to the tribes of Israel. **22** It shall be that you will divide it by lot as an inheritance for yourselves, and for the strangers who dwell among you and who bear children among you. They shall be to you as native-born among the children of Israel; they shall have an inheritance with you among the tribes of Israel. **23** And it shall be *that* in whatever tribe the stranger dwells, there you shall give *him* his inheritance,” says the Lord God.

- “The Pentateuch prescribes humane treatment for the aliens living in Israel (cf. Exodus 22:21; 23:9; Leviticus 19:10, 33–34; 23:22; Deuteronomy 14:29; 24:14–15, 17–22). Such treatment is a moral obligation that derives from Israel’s experience as aliens in Egypt. Ezekiel goes far beyond the Torah’s legislation.” (Vawter and Hoppe)

Division of the Land

- Ezekiel’s final vision describes the boundaries of a restored Israel, including the allotment to each tribe and the temple. Rather than following the boundaries traditionally occupied by the Israelites, which included Gilead east of the Jordan River and excluded land north of Tyre, Ezek-iel’s new boundaries generally follow those described by Moses in Numbers 34. Ezekiel’s vision also departs from the traditional allotment of the land among the 12 tribes and reassigns the land in horizontal bands from north to south.

48 “Now these *are* the names of the tribes: From the northern border along the road to Hethlon at the entrance of Hamath, to Hazar Enan, the border of Damascus northward, in the direction of Hamath, *there shall be one section for Dan* from its east to its west side; **2** by the border of Dan, from the east side to the west, one *section for Asher*; **3** by the border of Asher, from the east side to the west, one *section for Naphtali*; **4** by the border of Naphtali, from the east side to the west, one *section for Manasseh*; **5** by the border of Manasseh, from the east side to the west, one *section*

for Ephraim; ⁶ by the border of Ephraim, from the east side to the west, one *section* for Reuben; ⁷ by the border of Reuben, from the east side to the west, one *section* for Judah; ⁸ by the border of Judah, from the east side to the west, shall be the district which you shall set apart, twenty-five thousand *cubits* in width, and *in* length the same as one of the *other* portions, from the east side to the west, with the sanctuary in the center.

- Note: the allotment of land is given in band-like sections from north to south and the regions on the eastern side of the Jordan originally given to Reuben, Gad and Manasseh are either absorbed or ignored in Ezekiel's vision.
- Curiously, Dan is omitted in a listing of the tribes regarding the 144,000 in Revelation 7. Many think it was because Dan was the first tribe to embrace idolatry (Genesis 49:16-17 and Judges 17-18). Now, as a demonstration of God's great grace, not only is Dan included, they are listed first. (Enduring Word Commentary)
- For Judah: "It is immediately evident that Judah and Benjamin, the tribes which remained faithful to the Davidic dynasty, will be honored by proximity to the center of the millennial kingdom." (Feinberg)

⁹ "The district that you shall set apart for the Lord *shall be* twenty-five thousand *cubits* in length and ten thousand in width. ¹⁰ To these—to the priests—the holy district shall belong: on the north twenty-five thousand *cubits in length*, on the west ten thousand in width, on the east ten thousand in width, and on the south twenty-five thousand in length. The sanctuary of the Lord shall be in the center.

- As previously described in Ezekiel 45:1-6, this is an area that Israel will set apart for the LORD. It contains the temple described in Ezekiel 40-43, with the sanctuary of the LORD in the center. (Enduring Word Commentary)

¹¹ *It shall be* for the priests of the sons of Zadok, who are sanctified, who have kept My charge, who did not go astray when the children of Israel went astray, as the Levites went astray. ¹² And *this* district of land that is set apart shall be to them a thing most holy by the border of the Levites.

¹³ "Opposite the border of the priests, the Levites *shall have an area* twenty-five thousand *cubits* in length and ten thousand in width; its entire length *shall be* twenty-five thousand and its width ten thousand. ¹⁴ And they shall not sell or exchange any of it; they may not alienate this best *part* of the land, for *it is* holy to the Lord.

¹⁵ "The five thousand *cubits* in width that remain, along the edge of the twenty-five thousand, shall be for general use by the city, for dwellings and common-land; and the city shall be in the center. ¹⁶ These *shall be* its measurements: the north side four thousand five hundred *cubits*, the south side four thousand five hundred, the east side four thousand five hundred, and the west side four thousand five hundred. ¹⁷ The common-land of the city shall be: to the north two hundred and fifty *cubits*, to the south two hundred and fifty, to the east two hundred and fifty, and to the west two hundred and fifty. ¹⁸ The rest of the length, alongside the district of the holy *section*,

shall be ten thousand *cubits* to the east and ten thousand to the west. It shall be adjacent to the district of the holy *section*, and its produce shall be food for the workers of the city. ¹⁹ The workers of the city, from all the tribes of Israel, shall cultivate it. ²⁰ The entire district *shall be* twenty-five thousand *cubits* by twenty-five thousand *cubits*, foursquare. You shall set apart the holy district with the property of the city.

- “The city is about a mile and a half square (16), with an open space on each side (17), and land for cultivation to the east and west (18,19).” (Wright)
- “Notice once again the great minuteness of detail. This is more than strange, it is inexplicable, if all the statements are to be taken symbolically. As far as we are aware, no such abundance of details occurs anywhere else in Scripture outside the instructions for the construction of the tabernacle and its priestly service, which no orthodox expositor feels called upon to interpret other than with strict literalness. Then it is only consistent to do the same here.” (Feinberg)
- Its produce shall be food for the workers of the city: There would be land for farms and gardens bringing food to the people and workers of the city. (Endurin Word Commentary)

²¹ “The rest *shall belong* to the prince, on one side and on the other of the holy district and of the city’s property, next to the twenty-five thousand *cubits* of the *holy* district as far as the eastern border, and westward next to the twenty-five thousand as far as the western border, adjacent to the *tribal* portions; *it shall belong* to the prince. It shall be the holy district, and the sanctuary of the temple *shall be* in the center. ²² Moreover, apart from the possession of the Levites and the possession of the city *which are* in the midst of what *belongs* to the prince, *the area* between the border of Judah and the border of Benjamin shall belong to the prince.

- Who is the prince? Jesus will be the King of Kings, Ezekiel mentioned (45:7-8) repeatedly the prince over the Israelite people will be THE King David. A resurrected King David ruling in the new millennial Israel, would receive the allotted land set aside for the prince in this vision.
- This gives further evidence this vision is in the millennial reign of Christ.

²³ “As for the rest of the tribes, from the east side to the west, Benjamin *shall have one section*; ²⁴ by the border of Benjamin, from the east side to the west, Simeon *shall have one section*; ²⁵ by the border of Simeon, from the east side to the west, Issachar *shall have one section*; ²⁶ by the border of Issachar, from the east side to the west, Zebulun *shall have one section*; ²⁷ by the border of Zebulun, from the east side to the west, Gad *shall have one section*; ²⁸ by the border of Gad, on the south side, toward the South, the border shall be from Tamar *to* the waters of Meribah *by* Kadesh, along the brook to the Great Sea. ²⁹ This *is* the land which you shall divide by lot as an inheritance among the tribes of Israel, and these *are* their portions,” says the Lord God.

Maps of the Promised Land allotment in Ezekiel's Vision in Chapter 48:



Millennial Land Allotment - Ezekiel 47:15-21



The Gates of the City and Its Name

³⁰ “These *are* the exits of the city. On the north side, measuring four thousand five hundred *cubits* ³¹ (the gates of the city *shall be* named after the tribes of Israel), the three gates northward: one gate for Reuben, one gate for Judah, and one gate for Levi; ³² on the east side, four thousand five hundred *cubits*, three gates: one gate for Joseph, one gate for Benjamin, and one gate for Dan; ³³ on the south side, measuring four thousand five hundred *cubits*, three gates: one gate for Simeon, one gate for Issachar, and one gate for Zebulun; ³⁴ on the west side, four thousand five hundred *cubits* with their three gates: one gate for Gad, one gate for Asher, and one gate for Naphtali.

- The city – Jerusalem in the Messiah’s kingdom to come – will have memorial gates for each tribe. (Enduring Word Commentary)

- “The image of a city with twelve gates distributed equally among the four sides and named after the twelve tribes of Israel is strikingly unconventional. City walls were usually designed intentionally with only one gate.” (Block)
- The twelve gates “beautifully symbolizes at the same time in visible form the unity and harmony in the nation so long divided. All the ancient rivalries, contentions and jealousies will be gone, and blessed unity will prevail.” (Feinberg)
- All this is suggestive of, but not the same as, the eternal state as described in Revelation 21:12-14. “The whole passage leads us to compare Revelation 21, with its description of a new heaven and a new earth and the vision of the new Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God. It too had twelve gates, named after the twelve tribes of Israel, but it also had twelve foundations inscribed with the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.” (Taylor)
- One gate for Joseph: This list of the tribes follows the pattern of the 12 direct sons of Jacob/Israel. Joseph is one tribe, not two. (Enduring Word Commentary)

³⁵ All the way around *shall be* eighteen thousand *cubits*; and the name of the city from *that day shall be*: THE LORD IS THERE.”

- Throughout the larger section of Ezekiel 40-48, the name of the city of Jerusalem is never specifically mentioned. Here we discover why; God will give the city a new name. It will be known as Yahweh Shammah, “Yahweh is There.” In that day, the overwhelming character and idea of Jerusalem would be that God was there. (Enduring Word Commentary)
- Ezekiel experienced the horror of seeing the glory of God departing from the temple in a vision (Ezekiel 11). Then he saw it return (Ezekiel 43:5). Now, in the new name for the city, he received the assurance that God would remain.
- “We bethink us of the truth that there is to be a millennial age — a time of glory, and peace, and joy, and truth, and righteousness. But what is to be the glory of it? Why this, ‘Jehovah-shammah, the Lord is there!’” (Spurgeon)