

## October 21

**Scriptures:** Read Ezekiel 46, 47 & 48

**Key Verse:** "... the name of the city from that day shall be: THE LORD IS THERE."  
(Ezekiel 48:35)

### Overview

It is striking in these last chapters of Ezekiel that all those things which were imperfect, because of sinful man in the old Israel and the old temple, are made perfect in Ezekiel's temple; thus the plan of God, as He had intended it, would be fulfilled. It appears to describe well the "times of restoration" of which the Apostle Peter tells us were spoken of by the prophets (Acts 3:21). The Israelites had continually dishonoured and profaned God, but in Ezekiel's vision the Lord is continually glorified and hallowed, and all things are rectified and made new (cf. Rev. 21:5).

In the old system, they did not hallow the Sabbath, but in Ezekiel's vision the Sabbath is remembered as it was meant to be (46:1; cf. Isa. 66:23). As well as commemorating creation and the deliverance from bondage in Egypt, the keeping of the Sabbath was a sign of the covenant ( Deut. 5:12; Ex. 20:8-11; 31:12-17; Ezek. 20:12, 24). The Sabbath was the only day that the eastern gate of the inner court was to be opened, for that was a special day of worship to the Lord (46:1, 12). This gate, however, is not to be confused with the eastern gate of the outer court which was permanently sealed up (44:1-2). Since the prince was the Lord's representative, he was permitted to eat his bread at the closed outer gate (44:3), but since he was not a priest, he could not enter the inner court; he could only remain at the gateway of the east inner gate to worship and watch the priests' perform the offerings (46:2).

At Ezekiel's temple, the offerings were greater in number and quantity than those prescribed by the Mosaic law, which shows that it was a time of great blessing and prosperity from God (compare 46:4-7 with Num. 28:9-15). Interestingly, the only offerings mentioned are those in the morning (46:13), and the evening sacrifices of the old temple are not mentioned (Num. 28:4, 8; Ezra 3:3). Could this be explained by the Apostle John, who in his apocalypse tells us in his heavenly vision that there was no night, since the presence of the Lord Himself brought continual illumination? (Rev. 21:23; 22:5). In the Bible we find that light always accompanies the glory and presence of the Lord.

The order and organization of Ezekiel's temple is illustrated by the orderly fashion of the worshippers. Their order would enhance the reverence for God and be more conducive to worship and prayer. If they entered the outer court by way of one gate, they were to exit by the gate at the opposite side, and thus there would be no confusion among the vast number of worshippers (46:9). In the old temple, there was much hustle and bustle in the outer court, for which the Lord Jesus strongly expressed His anger; God's House was to be a house of prayer (Mark 11:15-17).

In chapter 47, Ezekiel describes a very wonderful detail about this future Kingdom of the Lord. From under the threshold there flowed a stream, originating from the throne of God, that flowed out by the east gate (47:1; cf. Rev. 22:1; Joel 3:18). As the water flowed eastward, it became

deeper until it was a river that could not be crossed without swimming. This water made every living thing refreshed, for it existed because of the presence of the Life-Giver Himself, the Lord God (cf. Acts 3:19; Ps. 46:4; Rev. 22:17). The waters made the fruit trees abundantly fruitful, so that every month they would yield new fruit for the inhabitants to enjoy, and the leaves of the trees would have a healing quality (47:7, 12; Rev. 22:2). In God's new earth, the place where there was once desert will be flourishing, for the curse will no longer be upon the earth (Is. 41:18; 43:19-20; 44:3; 55:13). The water from God's holy presence will bring healing, not only to the inhabitants and to the land but also to the lifeless Dead Sea; for this salt-laden body of water will become fresh and teeming with fish (En Gedi; 47:10).

Another great change will be in the division of the land. In the old land there were often boundary and size disputes, and the placement of each tribe's inheritance under Joshua was quite complicated. However, in Ezekiel's vision of the new land, the tribal allotments are very simple and equal (47:13), without regard to their original placement. The tribe closest to the sacred portion is that of Judah, the tribe which gave us the Messiah Jesus (48:8). Also in the old land, contrary to God's original plan, the two and one half tribes of Reuben, Gad, and half of Manasseh remained east of the Jordan. In Ezekiel's vision of the new land, however, all the tribes were west of the Jordan, thus forming a unified body (48:4, 6, 27). The position of the stranger is also different in the new land. The law of Moses had commanded that the Israelites show mercy and compassion to the stranger (Gentile) among them; in this way they were to reflect the love and mercy of God and be a witness to that person (Lev. 19:34; Ex. 22:21; 23:9; Deut. 1:16; 24:14). If he abandoned idolatry and converted to the worship of the true God, he could worship with them and participate in the Passover if he were circumcised (Ex. 12:48), yet he did not have the right to an inheritance in the land (cf. Lev. 25:47-55). Here, however, we read that the Gentiles are to have an equal portion of the inheritance in the land, for they too would be the people of God (47:22-23; Col. 3:11).

As Ezekiel describes the ideal, perfect, and beautiful city of Jerusalem, we see that it was perfectly square, having twelve gates (three on each side). These gates correspond to the twelve tribes (cf. Rev. 21:12-16), except Ezekiel tells us that the tribe of Levi is given a gate name and the Joseph tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh are combined and represented by the name of their father Joseph. The beautiful name of the Holy City is here called Yahweh Shammah, "The Lord is there" — a reminder of His dwelling forever in the midst of His people (cf. Rev. 21:3; other names are found in Isaiah 1:26; 33:20; 48:2; 52:1; 60:14; 62:2-4, 12; Jer. 3:17; 33:9, 16; Zech. 8:3; Ps. 46:4; 48:1-2).

## **Prayer**

Lord, give us hearts and minds that listen to You, comprehend what You are saying, and do as You desire. We praise You for Your many blessings.