
EZEKIEL 48: 1 Now these are the names of the tribes: From the north end, beside the way of Hethlon to the entrance of Hamath, Hazar Enan at the border of Damascus, northward beside Hamath, (and they shall have their sides east and west), Dan, one portion.

This chapter contains a description of the several portions of the land belonging to each tribe, together with the portion allotted to the sanctuary, city, suburb, and prince, vv. 1-29; as also the measure and gates of the new city, Eze 48:30-35.

Verse 1

Now these are the names of the tribes - See the division mentioned Num 34:7-12, which casts much light upon this.

EZEKIEL 48: 2 By the border of Dan, from the east side to the west side, Asher, one portion.

EZEKIEL 48: 3 By the border of Asher, from the east side even to the west side, Naphtali, one portion.

EZEKIEL 48: 4 By the border of Naphtali, from the east side to the west side, Manasseh, one portion.

EZEKIEL 48: 5 By the border of Manasseh, from the east side to the west side, Ephraim, one portion.

EZEKIEL 48: 6 By the border of Ephraim, from the east side even to the west side, Reuben, one portion.

EZEKIEL 48: 7 By the border of Reuben, from the east side to the west side, Judah, one portion.

EZEKIEL 48: 8 By the border of Judah, from the east side to the west side, shall be the offering which you shall offer, twenty-five thousand reeds in breadth, and in length as one of the portions, from the east side to the west side: and the sanctuary shall be in its midst.

EZEKIEL 48: 9 The offering that you shall offer to the LORD shall be twenty-five thousand reeds in length, and ten thousand in breadth.

Verse 9

The oblation - This was a portion of land twenty-five thousand cubits in length, by ten thousand broad; in the center of which was the temple, which must be destined for the use of the priests, the Levites, and the prince.

EZEKIEL 48: 10 For these, even for the priests, shall be the holy offering: toward the north twenty-five thousand in length, and toward the west ten thousand in breadth, and toward the east ten thousand in breadth, and toward the south twenty-five thousand in length: and the sanctuary of the LORD shall be in its midst.

EZEKIEL 48: 11 It shall be for the priests who are sanctified of the sons of Zadok, who have kept my instruction, who didn't go astray when the children of Israel went astray, as the Levites went astray.

EZEKIEL 48: 12 It shall be to them an offering from the offering of the land, a thing most holy, by the border of the Levites.

EZEKIEL 48: 13 Answerable to the border of the priests, the Levites shall have twenty-five thousand in length, and ten thousand in breadth: all the length shall be twenty-five thousand, and the breadth ten thousand.

EZEKIEL 48: 14 They shall sell none of it, nor exchange it, nor shall the first fruits of the land be alienated; for it is holy to the LORD.

EZEKIEL 48: 15 The five thousand that are left in the breadth, in front of the twenty-five thousand, shall be for common use, for the city, for dwelling and for suburbs; and the city shall be in its midst.

Verse 15

And the five thousand that are left - The territory of the Levites was twenty-five thousand square cubits, Eze 48:20, But their city was only four thousand five hundred square cubits, see Eze 48:13 and Eze 48:16; there remained, therefore, ten thousand cubits square to be divided, of which five thousand cubits in breadth, by twenty-five thousand in length, on the east and west sides, were reserved for a sort of second city; or for suburbs where laymen might dwell who were employed by those priests and Levites who lodged in the temple and in the city, Eze 48:18. And another space of one thousand cubits in breadth, by twenty-five thousand in length, which extended only from north to south, was for fields and gardens appointed for the support of those lay servants. On which we may remark, there was no cultivated land between the portion of the Levites and that of the prince, but only on the east and west sides. See Eze 45:6, and the map FF.

EZEKIEL 48: 16 These shall be its measures: the north side four thousand and five hundred, and the south side four thousand and five hundred, and on the east side four thousand and five hundred, and the west side four thousand and five hundred.

EZEKIEL 48: 17 The city shall have suburbs: toward the north two hundred fifty, and toward the south two hundred fifty, and toward the east two hundred fifty, and toward the west two hundred fifty.

EZEKIEL 48: 18 The remainder in the length, answerable to the holy offering, shall be ten thousand eastward, and ten thousand westward; and it shall be answerable to the holy offering; and its increase shall be for food to those who labour in the city.

EZEKIEL 48: 19 Those who labour in the city, out of all the tribes of Israel, shall cultivate it.

EZEKIEL 48: 20 All the offering shall be a square of twenty-five thousand by twenty-five thousand: you shall offer it as a holy offering, with the possession of the city.

EZEKIEL 48: 21 The remainder shall be for the prince, on the one side and on the other of the holy offering and of the possession of the city; in front of the twenty-five thousand of the offering toward the east border, and westward in front of the twenty-five thousand toward the west border, answerable to the portions, it shall be for the prince: and the holy offering and the sanctuary of the house shall be in its midst.

Verse 21

And the residue - for the prince - His portion was alongside that of the Levites, from west to east; these were on each side twenty-five thousand cubits in length, from the east to the west. by twelve thousand five hundred cubits in breadth from north to south. The space both above and below was equal, between the tribe of Judah and that of Benjamin to north and south; and the portion of the Levites, which had Judah and Benjamin to the north and south, and the portion of the prince to the east and to the west. See the map.

EZEKIEL 48: 22 Moreover from the possession of the Levites, and from the possession of the city, being in the midst of that which is the prince's, between the border of Judah and the border of Benjamin, it shall be for the prince.

EZEKIEL 48: 23 As for the rest of the tribes: from the east side to the west side, Benjamin, one portion.

EZEKIEL 48: 24 By the border of Benjamin, from the east side to the west side, Simeon, one portion.

EZEKIEL 48: 25 By the border of Simeon, from the east side to the west side, Issachar, one portion.

EZEKIEL 48: 26 By the border of Issachar, from the east side to the west side, Zebulun, one portion.

EZEKIEL 48: 27 By the border of Zebulun, from the east side to the west side, Gad, one portion.

EZEKIEL 48: 28 By the border of Gad, at the south side southward, the border shall be even from Tamar to the waters of Meribath Kadesh, to the brook, to the great sea.

Verse 28

From Tamar - in Kadesh - The former was on the south of the Dead Sea; and the latter, or Kadesh-Barnea, was still farther south, and at the extremity of the portion of Gad, which was the most southern tribe, as Dan was the most northern.

EZEKIEL 48: 29 This is the land which you shall divide by lot to the tribes of Israel for inheritance, and these are their several portions, says the Lord GOD.

EZEKIEL 48: 30 These are the exits of the city: On the north side four thousand and five hundred reeds by measure;

Verse 30

These are the goings out - Each of the four sides of the city was four thousand five hundred cubits long. There were three gates on each side, as mentioned below; and the whole circumference of the city was eighteen thousand cubits. See the map, plan B. dddd.

The rector of New Haven College, in New England, supposes the preceding representations to refer to the happy state of the Church in what is called the Millennium. Leaving this period out of the question, the following observations are worthy of notice: - "The Jews, for whom this vision was

intended, would conceive their country to be divided to the twelve tribes, in lots of a regular and mathematical form; and not confused or intermixed, as in Joshua's time. Their city laid out larger than before; and exactly foursquare, with regular suburbs; the temple and appendages much more commodious for their sacrifices, and the habitations of the priests and Levites regularly formed round about the temple. So that this whole plan of the division of the country, laying out of the city, temple, and all the appendages, appears to be perfectly regular and uniform, as if it were drawn all at one time, and by one hand, who had power to effect it; and therefore conveyed to the Jews the most complete idea they were capable of conceiving of the most perfect church, commonwealth, city, temple, and conveniences, for Divine worship.

I. The Holy Land, as described chap. 47 and 48, according to the original grant, being about two hundred and fifty miles long, north and south, and about one hundred and fifty miles wide, is divided, by parallel lines east and west, to the twelve tribes, each of them having a portion twenty miles wide. Only between Judah and Benjamin there is a holy portion near ten miles wide; in the middle of which is the holy oblation, twenty-five thousand cubits; that is, about ten miles square for the priests, Levites, city, and temple, Eze 45:1; Eze 48:8; the two ends are for the prince, Eze 45:7, etc.

II. The holy oblation, lying in the middle of the holy portion, is twenty-five thousand cubits square, which is near ten miles; of which ten thousand cubits, or four miles, are taken off from the north side for a habitation for the priests, and as much for the Levites on the south side, Eze 45:4, Eze 45:5, and Eze 48:20; and five thousand cubits in the middle for the city portion, Eze 45:6; in the middle of which is the city, four thousand five hundred cubits square, which is nearly two miles, Eze 48:15, Eze 48:16. Round about this is left two hundred and fifty cubits, near thirty rods, for suburbs, Eze 48:17. The remaining ten thousand cubits on the east side, and the ten thousand cubits on the west side, are for the profit of those who serve the city, out of all the tribes, Eze 48:18, Eze 48:19. The sanctuary is in the midst of the city, Eze 48:8.

III. The sanctuary or temple, and its appendages, were entirely surrounded with a wall six cubits high and six cubits thick, Eze 40:5; and five hundred cubits long on each side, Eze 42:15, etc., and Eze 45:2. In the middle square stands the temple, which was surrounded by a wall one hundred cubits long on each side, Eze 41:13, and six cubits thick, Eze 41:5. The side-chambers on the outside four cubits, Eze 41:5. The Holy of Holies, at the west end, was twenty cubits square on the inside, Eze 41:4. The holy place or outer court at the east end, was forty cubits, Eze 41:12. The length of the porch on the north side was twenty cubits; the breadth was eleven cubits, Eze 40:49; and the width of the separate place on the south side twenty cubits. On each side of the temple, towards the four gates in the outer wall, stood two courts, eight in the whole, each one hundred cubits square, Eze 40:19, Eze 40:23, Eze 40:27. In each of these were thirty-six little chambers or buildings, about six cubits square, viz., six at the entrance of the gate, Eze 40:7, Eze 40:17, Eze 40:20, etc., and thirty on the pavement, Eze 40:17, etc., which were for lodgings for the priests, for hanging up their garments, and their part of the sacrifices, Eze 42:13."

Calmet has constructed a map to show the position of the tribes, and the quantum of space each was to possess. As this will give a better view of the subject than any written description can, I have inserted one constructed for this work, which, consulting the places said to be connected with the possessions of the different tribes, shows that the tribes did not all possess the same quantum of space, five of the southern tribes possessing only one half as much as those of the north.

EZEKIEL 48: 31 and the gates of the city shall be after the names of the tribes of Israel, three gates northward: the gate of Reuben, one; the gate of Judah, one; the gate of Levi, one.

EZEKIEL 48: 32 At the east side four thousand and five hundred reeds, and three gates: even the gate of Joseph, one; the gate of Benjamin, one; the gate of Dan, one.

EZEKIEL 48: 33 At the south side four thousand and five hundred reeds by measure, and three gates: the gate of Simeon, one; the gate of Issachar, one; the gate of Zebulun, one.

EZEKIEL 48: 34 At the west side four thousand and five hundred reeds, with their three gates: the gate of Gad, one; the gate of Asher, one; the gate of Naphtali, one.

EZEKIEL 48: 35 It shall be eighteen thousand reeds around: and the name of the city from that day shall be, the LORD is there.

Verse 35

The name of the city from that day shall be, The Lord is there - It would have been better to have retained the original words: - יהוה שמה'

Yehovah Shammah.

This is an allusion to the shechinah, or symbol of the Divine Presence, which was in the first, but most certainly was not in the second temple; but Ezekiel tells us that the Divine Presence should be in the city of which he speaks; and should be there so fully and so powerfully, that it should give name to the city itself; and that the very name, Jehovah shammah, should remind all men of the supereminently glorious Being who had condescended to make this city his habitation.

Two points must be considered here: -

1. That the prophet intended that, when they should be restored, they should build the temple, and divide the land as he here directs, if the thing could be found to be practicable.
2. That he had another temple, another holy city, another Promised Land, in view. The land of Immanuel, the city of the New Jerusalem; and his temple, the Christian Church, which is the house of the living God, 1Tim 3:15, in which the presence of Christ shall ever be found; and all its inhabitants, all that believe on his name, shall be temples of the Holy Ghost. Nor can there be any reasonable doubt that the prophet here, by the Spirit of God, not only points out the return of the Israelites from the Babylonish captivity, and what was to befall them previously to the advent of Jesus Christ; but also the glorious spread of the Gospel in the earth, and the final conversion of the tribes of Israel by the preaching of that Gospel.

In conclusion, I think it necessary to state, that there are but few of the prophets of the Old Testament who have left a more valuable treasure to the Church of God than Ezekiel. It is true, he is in several places obscure; but there is a great proportion of the work that is in the highest degree edifying; and several portions that for the depth of the salvation predicted, and the accuracy and minuteness of the description, have nothing equal to them in the Old Testament Scriptures. On such portions, I have felt it my duty to be very particular, that I might be able to point out spiritual beauties and excellencies in this book which are beyond all praise; while I passed slightly over prophecies and symbols which I did not fully understand; but have left to time, by the fulfillment of the events, to prove to successive generations with what heavenly wisdom this much neglected prophet has spoken. And I take this opportunity to recommend this book to the serious perusal of

every pious man; and while he wonders at the extent of the wisdom by which Ezekiel has fathomed the depth of so many Divine mysteries, let him give God the glory for this additional testimony to the unsearchable riches of Christ, and that plenary salvation which he has purchased for, and freely offers to, the vilest of the vile, and to the whole of the descendants of Adam.

Masoretic Notes

Number of verses, 1, 273.

Middle verse, Eze 26:1.

Masoretic sections, 29.