

Review

It is the year 573BC, but for the last five chapters, we have been in the future - the Millennial reign of Christ. Beginning with chapter 40, we've been watching Ezekiel as he is given a tour of the Millennial Temple in Jerusalem.

The Lord has been telling Ezekiel how things are to operate in regards to the various aspects of the temple. Now, as we pick up in chapter 45, the perspective gets larger...

45:1-6 The Holy Portion Of The Land

Zooming out from just the temple, God directs Ezekiel's attention to the land surrounding it. Once the Jews are permanently and completely regathered into the land of Israel after the Tribulation, the land is going to be divided among the tribes.

But one portion of the land is going to be set aside - a holy portion. Literally, the length given is 25,000 and 20,000 - with no mention of cubits. The measurement is assumed, but we don't know which one to assume. It could be cubits, but it could also be rods. Remember that in chapter 40, we saw the rod described as...

Ezek. 40:5 ...a measuring rod of six cubits, each of which was a cubit and a handbreadth...

This rod is approximately ten feet long, which would mean that the holy portion of the land is 47 miles by 38 miles. Otherwise, the measurements would be seven miles by five and a half miles.

This holy portion of the land is set apart for the temple, for the priests, the Levites, and the city.

45:7-12 Princes Should Practice Righteousness

On either side of the holy portion is land set aside for the prince, about whom we talked about last time. God mentions that in the past, the leaders of Israel had greedily taken land from the people, and that this setup shows that this will never happen again. He uses this as an occasion to tell the leaders of Ezekiel's day to stop their corrupt practices, and change for the better.

The leaders of Ezekiel's day had been guilty of violence, destruction, and expropriations. (Expropriation is when the state takes away your property rights.)

He tells them to begin exercising justice, righteousness, and fairness. The "just balances" refer to the balance scales that were used to measure weight. It was easy to tip the balances in your favor by using dishonest weights - much like the butcher who puts his thumb on the scale. In the same way, the ephah and homer (dry measure), bath (liquid measure), and shekels (weight) were to be accurate as well.

45:13-17 The Offering For The Prince

Once God has established that the measurements will be accurate, He tells Ezekiel what the offerings will be in the Millennium. The people will give the offerings to the prince, and he will make the offerings that will purify the people.

45:18-20 Cleaning The Sanctuary

Even in the Millennium, the sanctuary will need cleansing. Why? Because of those who go astray or are naive. Yes, as disappointed as we might be to discover this, people are still people in the Millennium.

These two groups include those who commit error, as well as those who are "empty-headed" (the word for "naive" is "peth-EE" which means "simple," coming from a root words that means "spacious, wide open").

Since we have no hope of getting away from the human race for so long, maybe we should learn to deal with humans! Paul told us,

Eph. 4:2-3 with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing forbearance to one another in love, being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

Showing forbearance literally means "to tolerate, to put up with, to endure," people. And since problem people are never going away, then we'd better learn to do as Paul says.

"But Lord, how can I put up with such an annoying person? Such an abrasive personality? Such a troublemaker?" His response? "Love." Jesus said,

John 15:12 "This is My commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you."

Think about how much Jesus has put up with from us. And still He loves us. He's never left us, nor forsaken us. Even when we've been in error, or acted empty-headed!

45:21-24 The Passover

The Passover will be celebrated in the Millennium - a continual celebration of the Lamb of God Who caused the judgment for sin to pass over those who believe.

45:25 Feast Of Tabernacles

The Feast of Tabernacles (Booths, Ingathering) will also be observed in the Millennium. Interestingly, Zechariah tells us some details about what will happen then:

Zech. 14:16-19 Then it will come about that any who are left of all the nations that went against Jerusalem will go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to celebrate the Feast of Booths. And it will be that whichever of the families of the earth does not go up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, there will be no rain on them. If the family of Egypt does not go up or enter, then no rain will fall on them; it will be the plague with which the LORD smites the nations who do not go up to celebrate the Feast of Booths. This will be the punishment of Egypt, and the punishment of all the nations who do not go up to celebrate the Feast of Booths.

Going up to Jerusalem to be in the presence of the Lord! How I look forward to that day! Isaiah said,

Is. 2:2-4 Now it will come about that in the last days the mountain of the house of the LORD will be established as the chief of the mountains, and will be raised above the hills; And all the nations will stream to it. And many peo-

ples will come and say, "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; That He may teach us concerning His ways and that we may walk in His paths." For the law will go forth from Zion and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. And He will judge between the nations, and will render decisions for many peoples; And they will hammer their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not lift up sword against nation, and never again will they learn war.

As hard as it is to understand or believe, we will see outright disobedience in the Millennium - just as we have seen error and empty-headedness. Those who refuse to go to Jerusalem to participate in worship, will suffer the penalty of drought.

46:1-3 The Sabbath In The Millennium

The Sabbath day will be in operation in the Millennium - six days of work, one day of rest. Accordingly, the gate to the inner court will be open on the sabbath, but closed the other six days.

(46:4-15) Offerings

These verses describe various offerings in detail: the burnt offering, grain offering, new moon, etc.

46:16-18 The Year Of Liberty

Here we are reminded that the prince is a man, having sons, and operating under a system of laws that keeps him from the same wrongdoing that the princes in Ezekiel's day were guilty of.

Just like previously under the law, in the Millennium a portion of the land may only be given temporarily. It reverts back in the year of liberty (jubilee), which happens every 50 years (Lev 25:10-13).

(46:19-24) The Boiling And Baking Place

In these verses, Ezekiel is shown some kitchens in the corners of the court where the offerings were boiled or baked.

47:1-12 Water Flows From The Temple

We have read of this water flowing from the temple before. Zechariah wrote of it, saying

Zech. 14:8 And in that day living waters will flow out of Jerusalem, half of them toward the eastern sea and the other half toward the western sea; it will be in summer as well as in winter.

The seas mentioned here are the Mediterranean to the west, and the Dead Sea, to the east.

Now, in Ezekiel we are shown that it starts as a trickle, and turns into a massive river. Everywhere the water flows, it brings life. The trees that grow will produce fruit for food, and leaves for healing.

People often mistake what is written here with what is described in Revelation 22...

Rev. 22:1-2 Then he showed me a river of the water of life, clear as crystal, coming from the throne of God and of the Lamb, in the middle of its street. On either side of the river was the tree of life, bearing twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit every month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.

Although this is a similar set-up, this describes what we will see in the new heavens and new earth, after the final destruction of the original heavens and the earth.

(47:13-23) Boundaries Of Israel

The rest of chapter 47 describes boundaries of the land that will be divided among the tribes. This only describes the land over to the Jordan River. But the total possession of the land will extend to the Euphrates River (Deut 1:7; 11:24; Josh. 1:4).

(48:1-7) The Tribes' Inheritance, Part One

God begins to describe in detail the inheritance that each tribe will receive, starting from the north and going southward.

(48:8-22) The Holy Portion

In the middle of the description, God describes the holy portion of the land, where the temple is, as well as the land of the priests, Levites, prince, and Jerusalem.

(48:23-29) The Tribes' Inheritance, Part Two

Continuing southward, God finishes the details of each tribe's inheritance.

(48:30-34) The Gates Of The City

Lastly, God describes the exit gates of Jerusalem.

48:35 The Lord Is There

One final detail as the book of Ezekiel comes to a close: the name of Jerusalem is going to be changed. Right now, "Jerusalem" is a prophetic name: "Vision of Peace." But in that day, it will be completed, and so it will have a new name: "Yahweh-Shammah," which means "the Lord is there."

As Gideon once said, "the Lord is Peace" (Judg. 6:24). Jerusalem will no longer be looking for peace, but will receive it. Until that day comes, we are called to...

Psa. 122:6 Pray for the peace of Jerusalem...