

Second Baptist Church of Doylestown

Ezekiel Chapter 47-48

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Ezekiel Chapter 47

The River From the Temple - Verses 1-12

¹The man brought me back to the entrance to the temple, and I saw water coming out from under the threshold of the temple toward the east (for the temple faced east). The water was coming down from under the south side of the temple, south of the altar. ²He then brought me out through the north gate and led me around the outside to the outer gate facing east, and the water was trickling from the south side. ³As the man went eastward with a measuring line in his hand, he measured off a thousand cubits and then led me through water that was ankle-deep. ⁴He measured off another thousand cubits and led me through water that was knee-deep. He measured off another thousand and led me through water that was up to the waist. ⁵He had measured off another thousand, but now it was a river that I could not cross, because the water had risen and was deep enough to swim in—a river that no one could cross. ⁶He asked me, "Son of man, do you see this?" Then he led me back to the bank of the river. ⁷When I arrived there, I saw a great number of trees on each side of the river. ⁸He said to me, "This water flows toward the eastern region and goes down into the Arabah, where it enters the Dead Sea. When it empties into the sea, the salty water there becomes fresh. ⁹Swarms of living creatures will live wherever the river flows. There will be large numbers of fish, because this water flows there and makes the salt water fresh; so where the river flows everything will live. ¹⁰Fishermen will stand along the shore; from En Gedi to En Eglaim there will be places for spreading nets. The fish will be of many kinds—like the fish of the Mediterranean Sea. ¹¹But the swamps and marshes will not become fresh; they will be left for salt. ¹²Fruit trees of all kinds will grow on both banks of the river. Their leaves will not wither, nor will their fruit fail. Every month they will bear fruit, because the water from the sanctuary flows to them. Their fruit will serve for food and their leaves for healing."

47:1-12 This river is similar to the river mentioned in Revelation 22:1-2. Both rivers are associated with the river in the Garden of Eden (see Genesis 2:10). The river symbolizes life from God and the blessings that flow from his throne. It is a gentle, safe, deep river, expanding as it flows.

47:8-9 The "Arabah" is the geological depression in which the Dead Sea lies. The sea that will be "healed," or become fresh, refers to the Dead Sea, a body of water so salty that nothing can live in it. The river will freshen the Dead Sea's water so it can support life. This is another picture of the life-giving nature of the water that flows from God's temple. God's power can transform us no matter how lifeless or corrupt we may be. Even when we feel messed up and beyond hope, his power can heal us.

The Boundaries of the Land - Verses 13-23

¹³This is what the Sovereign LORD says: "These are the boundaries of the land that you will divide among the twelve tribes of Israel as their inheritance, with two portions for Joseph. ¹⁴You are to divide it equally among them. Because I swore with uplifted hand to give it to your ancestors, this land will become your inheritance. ¹⁵"This is to be the boundary of the land: "On the north side it will run from the Mediterranean Sea by the Hethlon roadpast Lebo Hamath to

Zedad,¹⁶ Berothah and Sibram (which lies on the border between Damascus and Hamath), as far as Hazer Hattikon, which is on the border of Hauran.¹⁷ The boundary will extend from the sea to Hazar Enan, along the northern border of Damascus, with the border of Hamath to the north. This will be the northern boundary.¹⁸ "On the east side the boundary will run between Hauran and Damascus, along the Jordan between Gilead and the land of Israel, to the Dead Sea and as far as Tamar. This will be the eastern boundary.¹⁹ "On the south side it will run from Tamar as far as the waters of Meribah Kadesh, then along the Wadi of Egypt to the Mediterranean Sea. This will be the southern boundary.²⁰ "On the west side, the Mediterranean Sea will be the boundary to a point opposite Lebo Hamath. This will be the western boundary.²¹ "You are to distribute this land among yourselves according to the tribes of Israel.²² You are to allot it as an inheritance for yourselves and for the foreigners residing among you and who have children. You are to consider them as native-born Israelites; along with you they are to be allotted an inheritance among the tribes of Israel.²³ In whatever tribe a foreigner resides, there you are to give them their inheritance," declares the Sovereign LORD.

47: 13-14 In this future period, each of the 12 tribes of Israel will receive a share of the country. All these shares will be the same size. The tribe called Levi will not have a share. Their part will be in the holy area. But the family of Joseph will be as two tribes. Joseph had two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh. The 12 tribes will include these two families. They will each receive a share.

In the Old Testament, the tribes selected their shares of the country. The tribes called Reuben, Gad and half of Manasseh took the country east of the Jordan River. But in this future time all the tribes will be to the west of the Jordan River. They will not select their shares. God has fixed the share for each tribe. God has promised to give this country to the Israelites (Genesis 15:18-21). They must make sure that each tribe keeps its share of the country.

47:15-20 These verses mention the names of places on Israel's borders. These borders are similar to the ones that God gave to ancient Israel (Numbers 34:3-12). But the names in these verses are the names of places when Ezekiel was alive. After many centuries, places often have new names. So, we do not know many of these places now. The western border will be the Mediterranean Sea. The border to the east will be the Jordan River. The north border probably goes to the east from the mouth of the Litani River. The southern border reaches the 'river of Egypt'. The 'river of Egypt' does not mean the river Nile. It means Wadi el Arish, which is at the border of Israel and Egypt.

47:22-23 In the restoration there will be room for foreigners. The regulations of Leviticus 24:22 and Numbers 15:29 provided for this. Isaiah also taught it (Isaiah 56:3-8). The children of foreigners will even inherit property like Israelites. Anyone who accepts the standards and is willing to obey may enjoy the blessings of God's rule.

Ezekiel Chapter 48

The Division of the Land - Verses 1-29

¹ "These are the tribes, listed by name: At the northern frontier, Dan will have one portion; it will follow the Hethlon road to Lebo Hamath; Hazar Enan and the northern border of Damascus next to Hamath will be part of its border from the east side to the west side.² "Asher will have one portion; it will border the territory of Dan from east to west.³ "Naphtali will have one portion; it will border the territory of Asher from east to west.⁴ "Manasseh will have one portion; it will border the territory of Naphtali from east to west.⁵ "Ephraim will have one

portion; it will border the territory of Manasseh from east to west. ⁶ "Reuben will have one portion; it will border the territory of Ephraim from east to west. ⁷ "Judah will have one portion; it will border the territory of Reuben from east to west. ⁸ "Bordering the territory of Judah from east to west will be the portion you are to present as a special gift. It will be 25,000 cubits wide, and its length from east to west will equal one of the tribal portions; the sanctuary will be in the center of it. ⁹ "The special portion you are to offer to the LORD will be 25,000 cubits long and 10,000 cubits wide. ¹⁰ This will be the sacred portion for the priests. It will be 25,000 cubits long on the north side, 10,000 cubits wide on the west side, 10,000 cubits wide on the east side and 25,000 cubits long on the south side. In the center of it will be the sanctuary of the LORD. ¹¹ This will be for the consecrated priests, the Zadokites, who were faithful in serving me and did not go astray as the Levites did when the Israelites went astray. ¹² It will be a special gift to them from the sacred portion of the land, a most holy portion, bordering the territory of the Levites. ¹³ "Alongside the territory of the priests, the Levites will have an allotment 25,000 cubits long and 10,000 cubits wide. Its total length will be 25,000 cubits and its width 10,000 cubits. ¹⁴ They must not sell or exchange any of it. This is the best of the land and must not pass into other hands, because it is holy to the LORD. ¹⁵ "The remaining area, 5,000 cubits wide and 25,000 cubits long, will be for the common use of the city, for houses and for pastureland. The city will be in the center of it ¹⁶ and will have these measurements: the north side 4,500 cubits the south side 4,500 cubits, the east side 4,500 cubits, and the west side 4,500 cubits. ¹⁷ The pastureland for the city will be 250 cubits on the north, 250 cubits on the south, 250 cubits on the east, and 250 cubits on the west. ¹⁸ What remains of the area, bordering on the sacred portion and running the length of it, will be 10,000 cubits on the east side and 10,000 cubits on the west side. Its produce will supply food for the workers of the city. ¹⁹ The workers from the city who farm it will come from all the tribes of Israel. ²⁰ The entire portion will be a square, 25,000 cubits on each side. As a special gift you will set aside the sacred portion, along with the property of the city. ²¹ "What remains on both sides of the area formed by the sacred portion and the property of the city will belong to the prince. It will extend eastward from the 25,000 cubits of the sacred portion to the eastern border, and westward from the 25,000 cubits to the western border. Both these areas running the length of the tribal portions will belong to the prince, and the sacred portion with the temple sanctuary will be in the center of them. ²² So the property of the Levites and the property of the city will lie in the center of the area that belongs to the prince. The area belonging to the prince will lie between the border of Judah and the border of Benjamin. ²³ "As for the rest of the tribes: Benjamin will have one portion; it will extend from the east side to the west side. ²⁴ "Simeon will have one portion; it will border the territory of Benjamin from east to west. ²⁵ "Issachar will have one portion; it will border the territory of Simeon from east to west. ²⁶ "Zebulun will have one portion; it will border the territory of Issachar from east to west. ²⁷ "Gad will have one portion; it will border the territory of Zebulun from east to west. ²⁸ "The southern boundary of Gad will run south from Tamar to the waters of Meribah Kadesh, then along the Wadi of Egypt to the Mediterranean Sea. ²⁹ "This is the land you are to allot as an inheritance to the tribes of Israel, and these will be their portions," declares the Sovereign LORD.

48:1 The land would be divided into 13 parallel portions (one for each tribe plus a sacred district) that would stretch from the Jordan River or Dead Sea to the Mediterranean Sea. The division of the land shows that in God's kingdom there is a place for all who believe in and obey the one true God (see John 14:1-6).

48:8-12 To the south of Judah's share there will be the holy area of land. The total length of this area from east to west will be the same as the tribe's shares. In this total area, there will be a square

of 8.3 miles (13.4 kilometres). From the north of this square 3.3 miles (5.3 kilometres) width is for the Levites. The next 3.3 miles (5.3 kilometres) width is for the Lord. The last 1.7 miles (2.7 kilometres) is for the city. The Lord's share will be for the Zadok priests. They will live there. But in the centre of it will be the temple area.

48:14-20 South of the holy area will be the 1.7 miles (2.7 kilometres) for the city. The city will be in a square of $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles (2.4 kilometres). This will be in the centre of this whole area. All round the city there will open ground $437\frac{1}{2}$ feet (135 metres) wide. So, the city and its open ground make a square of 1.7 miles (2.7 kilometres). Beyond this square on each side, there will be land 3.3 miles (5.3 kilometres) by 1.7 miles (2.7 kilometres). This land by the sides of the city area will be for farms. People from the tribes will live in the city. Some of them will work here to provide food for the city.

48:23-29 To the south of the holy area will be the shares of the other 5 tribes. The shares are all the same size. Each share goes from the Mediterranean Sea to the Jordan River. Judah and Benjamin are next to the holy area. This may be because these two tribes were more loyal to the temple than the other tribes were. The 12 tribes come from the sons of Jacob. He had 8 sons by his two wives. Their shares will be next to the holy area. To the north, there will be the shares for Judah, Reuben, and Joseph (Ephraim and Manasseh). To the south, there will be the shares for Benjamin, Simeon, Issachar and Zebulun. Also, Jacob had sons from the maids of his wives. Their shares will be furthest from the holy area. To the north, there will be Naphtali, Asher and Dan. To the far south, there will be the share of Gad. Because of their cruelty, Jacob prophesied against Simeon and Levi. They did not receive shares in the time of Joshua. They lived among the other tribes. But in the future Simeon's tribe will have a share. It will be equal to the shares of the other tribes. And Levi's tribe will have their place in the holy area. So all the tribes will be there. They will all have their proper place in the country. No tribe will have more land than another tribe. This may not be possible or practical by the present geography of Israel. But many things in this world will change when Jesus the Messiah returns. He will rule the world. And all his judgements will be fair and good.

The Gates of the New City - Verses 30-35

³⁰ "These will be the exits of the city: Beginning on the north side, which is 4,500 cubits long, ³¹ the gates of the city will be named after the tribes of Israel. The three gates on the north side will be the gate of Reuben, the gate of Judah and the gate of Levi. ³² "On the east side, which is 4,500 cubits long, will be three gates: the gate of Joseph, the gate of Benjamin and the gate of Dan. ³³ "On the south side, which measures 4,500 cubits, will be three gates: the gate of Simeon, the gate of Issachar and the gate of Zebulun. ³⁴ "On the west side, which is 4,500 cubits long, will be three gates: the gate of Gad, the gate of Asher and the gate of Naphtali. ³⁵ "The distance all around will be 18,000 cubits. "And the name of the city from that time on will be: THE LORD IS THERE."

48:35 The book of Ezekiel begins by describing the holiness of God that Israel had despised and ignored. As a result, God's presence departed from the temple, the city, and the people. The book ends with a detailed vision of the new temple, the new city, and the new people—all demonstrating God's holiness. The pressures of everyday life may cause us to focus on the here and now and thus forget God. That is why worship is so important; it takes our eyes off our current worries, gives us a glimpse of God's holiness, and allows us to look toward his future kingdom. God's presence makes everything glorious, and worship brings us into his presence.