

### The Division of the Land Around the Millennial Temple

#### Ezekiel 45

Ezekiel 45:1-8 - *“Moreover, when you divide the land by lot into inheritance, you shall set apart a district for the Lord, a holy section of the land; its length shall be twenty-five thousand cubits, and the width ten thousand. It shall be holy throughout its territory all around. <sup>2</sup> Of this there shall be a square plot for the sanctuary, five hundred by five hundred rods, with fifty cubits around it for an open space. <sup>3</sup> So this is the district you shall measure: twenty-five thousand cubits long and ten thousand wide; in it shall be the sanctuary, the Most Holy Place. <sup>4</sup> It shall be a holy section of the land, belonging to the priests, the ministers of the sanctuary, who come near to minister to the Lord; it shall be a place for their houses and a holy place for the sanctuary. <sup>5</sup> An area twenty-five thousand cubits long and ten thousand wide shall belong to the Levites, the ministers of the temple; they shall have twenty chambers as a possession. <sup>6</sup> “You shall appoint as the property of the city an area five thousand cubits wide and twenty-five thousand long, adjacent to the district of the holy section; it shall belong to the whole house of Israel. <sup>7</sup> “The prince shall have a section on one side and the other of the holy district and the city’s property; and bordering on the holy district and the city’s property, extending westward on the west side and eastward on the east side, the length shall be side by side with one of the tribal portions, from the west border to the east border. <sup>8</sup> The land shall be his possession in Israel; and My princes shall no more oppress My people, but they shall give the rest of the land to the house of Israel, according to their tribes.”*

#### Background Notes

Ezekiel 40-43 was a detailed description of a great Temple complex to be built in Jerusalem in the future. This Temple did not fit the description of any Temple in the past, and it cannot be spiritualized or allegorized to the Church today without changing basic principles of interpretation of Scripture, so these chapters must have been a description of a literal Temple that is yet to be built in the future. Specifically, we believe it will be built when the Lord returns to this earth and establishes His earthly kingdom (known as the Millennium, because it will last for 1000 years).

Ezekiel 44 was a detailed description of the daily operation of this millennial Temple, including the functions of the priests, who will be in the Levitical line of Zadok.

The first half of Ezekiel 45 was a detailed description of the designated nation and the division of the land surrounding the millennial Temple that will be for the priests and the Levites of that day, and for the “prince” (chapter 44), the civil ruler over restored Israel. The prince will have designated power and authority under the kingship of Jesus Christ throughout the millennial kingdom here on this earth.

## Doctrinal Points

### 1. During the Millennium, the land surrounding the Temple will be for the priests, the Levites and the prince.

Ezekiel 48 revealed that the land of Israel will be divided into twelve strips of territory for the various tribes of restored Israel. These strips of land will run from the Mediterranean Sea to the Jordan River - and maybe beyond. Between the northern edge of the tribe of Judah's strip of land, and the southern edge of the land for the tribe of Benjamin, there will be an additional strip of land. This land will include Jerusalem and the Temple complex, as well as land for the priests, the Levites and the prince. That strip of land was described in Ezekiel 45:1-8.

There is some question as to the exact dimensions of the subdivision of this strip of land because it is not known whether the measuring unit used was rods or cubits. In any case, if it is cubits, then a square of land, about eight miles on each side, in this strip of territory will be called the "holy portion" of the land. It will include the city of Jerusalem, the Temple complex, and the land for the priests and the Levites. The rest of the strip of land from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea will be for the prince.

The eight-mile square of land will be subdivided into several portions. A portion will contain the Temple complex and its surroundings, where the priests in the line of Zadok will live, and another portion will be where the Levites will live.

During Old Testament times, the Levites were scattered throughout the land, among the tribes of Israel, and they were to teach the people. They lived in 48 Levitical cities, six of which were the Cities of Refuge. In the millennial kingdom, the priests and the Levites will be concentrated in the Jerusalem area. In this approximately eight-mile-square area, a portion of land will contain the capital city of Jerusalem and its surrounding lands.

In Ezekiel 45:9-12, in view of the coming righteous leadership of Israel during the Millennium, Israel's leaders of Ezekiel's time were rebuked for their unrighteous leadership: *"Thus says the Lord God: "Enough, O princes of Israel! Remove violence and plundering, execute justice and righteousness, and stop dispossessing My people," says the Lord God.* <sup>10</sup> *"You shall have honest scales, an honest ephah, and an honest bath."* In view of the honest, just and righteous leadership during the Millennium, the leaders of Ezekiel's day were called to practice social justice and righteous leadership.

### 2. During the Millennium, the Temple sacrifices will not be for taking away sins.

Ezekiel 45:13-25 - *"This is the offering which you shall offer: you shall give one-sixth of an ephah from a homer of wheat, and one-sixth of an ephah from a homer of barley.* <sup>14</sup> *The ordinance concerning oil, the bath of oil, is one-tenth of a bath from a kor. A kor is a homer or ten baths, for ten baths are a homer.* <sup>15</sup> *And one lamb shall be given from a flock of two*

*hundred, from the rich pastures of Israel. These shall be for grain offerings, burnt offerings, and peace offerings, to make atonement for them,” says the Lord God. <sup>16</sup> “All the people of the land shall give this offering for the prince in Israel. <sup>17</sup> Then it shall be the prince’s part to give burnt offerings, grain offerings, and drink offerings, at the feasts, the New Moons, the Sabbaths, and at all the appointed seasons of the house of Israel. He shall prepare the sin offering, the grain offering, the burnt offering, and the peace offerings to make atonement for the house of Israel.”*

*<sup>18</sup> “Thus says the Lord God: “In the first month, on the first day of the month, you shall take a young bull without blemish and cleanse the sanctuary. <sup>19</sup> The priest shall take some of the blood of the sin offering and put it on the doorposts of the temple, on the four corners of the ledge of the altar, and on the gateposts of the gate of the inner court. <sup>20</sup> And so you shall do on the seventh day of the month for everyone who has sinned unintentionally or in ignorance. Thus you shall make atonement for the temple.*

*<sup>21</sup> “In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month, you shall observe the Passover, a feast of seven days; unleavened bread shall be eaten. <sup>22</sup> And on that day the prince shall prepare for himself and for all the people of the land a bull for a sin offering. <sup>23</sup> On the seven days of the feast he shall prepare a burnt offering to the Lord, seven bulls and seven rams without blemish, daily for seven days, and a kid of the goats daily for a sin offering. <sup>24</sup> And he shall prepare a grain offering of one ephah for each bull and one ephah for each ram, together with a hin of oil for each ephah.*

*<sup>25</sup> “In the seventh month, on the fifteenth day of the month, at the feast, he shall do likewise for seven days, according to the sin offering, the burnt offering, the grain offering, and the oil.”*

In these verses Ezekiel revealed that during the Millennium, the prince would be responsible to provide for the regular sacrifice of animals and grain that the people will give to the Lord. The prince will have to provide a sin offering for himself and the people, which showed that the prince here will certainly **not be** the Lord Himself, or the “resurrected King David in a sinless body.” During the Millennium, the Jewish feasts will be kept: Passover, Unleavened Bread, and Tabernacles. It may be that the other feasts will be kept as well.

In these verses we are once again confronted with the difficult question of animal sacrifices during the Millennium. Why will sacrifices be made if the Lord Jesus has already provided the one great sacrifice of Himself as the Lamb of God? Once again, the basic answer to this question is that these sacrifices will not take away sin, just as the Old Testament sacrifices never removed sin. As the Old Testament sacrifices looked forward to or *anticipated* the coming sacrificial work of Christ, so the millennial sacrifices will look backward and *commemorate* the sacrificial work of Christ. In this sense they will be a “remembrance,” somewhat similar to the Lord’s Supper today. The Lord’s Supper will not be celebrated during the Millennium. The Lord’s Supper was specifically given to the Church. The Lord Jesus asked us to “remember “Him until He comes again (1 Corinthians 11:26). The era of the Church will be over before the time of the Millennium.

Some people ask, “Will the Millennium be like going back to Old Testament times?” No, I think the Millennium will be more of a *fulfillment of all that Israel and its sacrificial system was meant to be*. Israel was meant to be a holy nation, and a light to the Gentiles. The way of sacrifice emphasized that sinners could not save themselves. Finally during the

Millennium, restored Israel will be a light to the Gentiles. The sacrifices of the Millennium will point to Jesus Christ as the Savior, because He was sacrificed for sin.

During the 1000-year period of the Millennium, the many people who will be born will be sinners with sinful natures, and they will need to be saved. The Temple sacrifices will point these people to Christ - not only as the King who will be reigning over this world, but as the Savior who died for the sins of the world and their only means of salvation. The sacrifices will not take away sin, but they will point to the One who **can** take away sin. During the Millennium, the purpose of the Temple sacrifices will not be for taking away sins.

## Practical Application

### Don't cheat your customers or clients!

Verses 9-12 were Ezekiel's exhortation from the Lord to the leaders of Israel to practice social justice and righteousness. That included having "just weights and balances" in commerce. "*You shall have honest scales, an honest ephah, and an honest bath. Ephah and the bath shall be of the same measure so that the bath contains one tenth of a homer and ephah one tenth of a homer. Their measure shall be according to the homer*" (v10-11).

Verse 9: "*Thus says the Lord God: "Enough, O princes of Israel! Remove violence and plundering, execute justice and righteousness, and stop dispossessing My people," says the Lord God.*" In those days, it was easy to cheat customers by using false weights for business scales, or undersized vessels for measuring grain or oil.

This cheating was **sin**. It was stealing - both then and today. There are still easy ways to overcharge or cheat customers or clients in business today. How terrible and disgraceful if a Christian is involved in such a practice! How dishonoring to the Lord, who gave His life for us!

Don't cheat your customers or clients!